

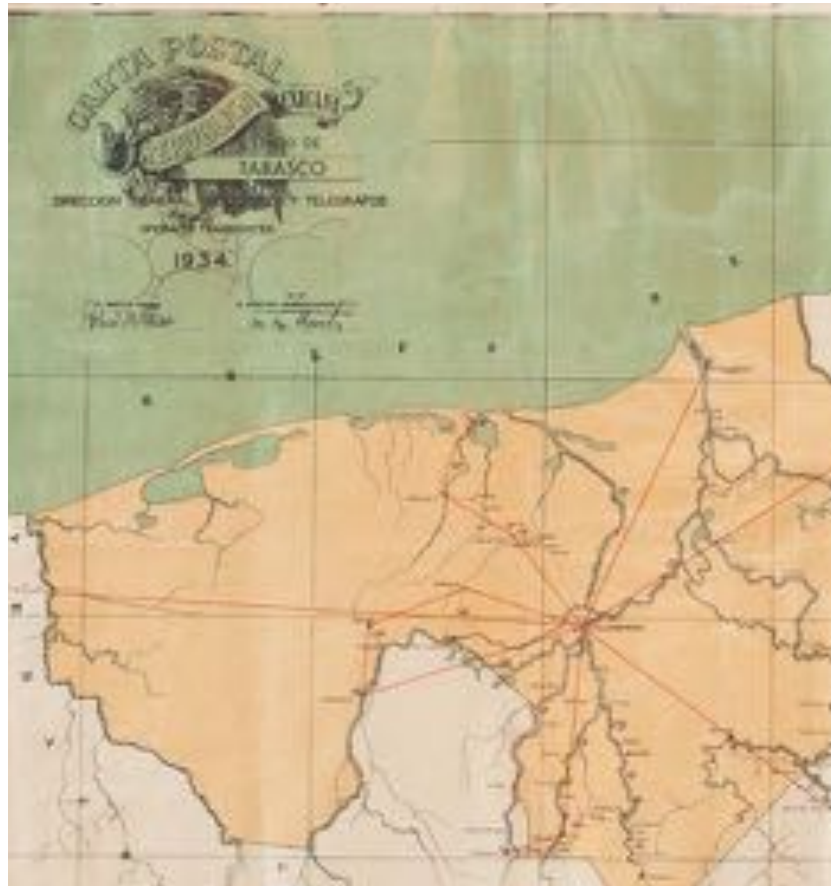
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Mediterranean Mail * Mohawk & Hudson RR Mail

New York & the Express Mail of 1836-1839 * UPU Iconography

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Editors: Diane DeBlois & Robert Dalton Harris, P.O. Box 477, West Sand Lake NY 12196,
U.S.A. <agatherin@yahoo.com>

Editorial Board: Yamil H. Kouri; Roger P. Quinby; Stephen S. Washburne; &

U.S. Associate Editor: Kenneth Grant, E11960 Kessler Rd., Baraboo WI 53913 <kenneth.grant@uwc.edu>

Foreign Associate Editor: Daniel Piazza, National Postal Museum, P.O. Box 37012 MRC
570, Washington DC 20013-7012 <piazzad@si.edu>

Advertising Manager: Michael Mead <michael.e.mead@verizon.net>

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Mediterranean Mail

Claude Clerc : Shipping Agent or Operator?

By Steve Ellis

Much is known, thanks to the work of the French postal historian Raymond Salles, about the carriage of mail between Mediterranean ports during the nineteenth century by the regular paquebot services, initially operated by the state from 1837 and subsequently by shipping companies such as Messageries, Valéry and others operating contracted services from 1850/1.

Less is known, however, about the non-contract or 'commercial' services operated by a number of shipping companies carrying mail, passengers and freight around the Mediterranean, especially to and from Marseille and the Italian ports. Known French operators included Fraissinet, Bazin, Rostand and Valéry but there were Italian companies too.

One such was Compagnia di Navigazione a Vapore delle due Sicile (known to the French as Compagnie Napolitaine). They appointed Claude Clerc et Compagnie to be their Marseille agent, in order to provide all their shipping needs and provisions in that city and to direct passengers, freight and mail to their vessels. In return the agent received commission of at least 2% of the value of revenue earned.

Claude Clerc, established as a company by the 1820s was by 1836 promoting its agency for the "Service des Paquebots a Vapeur Napolitains" with a beautifully illustrated letter heading showing two of Napolitain's vessels and indicating the services departures from Marseille to Genoa, Livourne and Civitavecchia on the 5th, 15th and 25th of each month (clearly operating prior to and subsequently in competition with the French state paquebot service). See Figure 1.



Figure 1. Letterhead for Claude Clerc's agency in Marseille, used in 1836. Lithographed by Charavel in Marseille, the illustration is of 3 steamships, the Marie Christine (160 horse power) on the left, the François Premier (140) on the right, and the Royal Ferdinand (80) in the middle distance.

Claude Clerc over time utilised four different cachets, in colors of blue and black, as an administrative mark, being applied to mail on departure from or arrival at Marseille (Figure 2).



Figure 2. Claude Clerc's 4 styles of handstamp marks at Marseille.

One can identify several different types of mail using the Claude Clerc cachet. Firstly where C.C. act as forwarders receiving mail at Marseille and placing it on board an appropriate vessel without it ever going into the postal service. The example shown in Figure 3 is of mail from Fraissinet in Marseille, who applied their company's cachet to a letter written in 1841 and indicated that it was to be carried to Livourne by the ship "Mongibello." This was arranged by Claude Clerc who applied their own cachet and placed the letter on board the Napolitain vessel.

Figure 3. Letter originating in Marseille in 1841, forwarded to Livourne by Claude Clerc aboard the ship Mongibello.



Secondly C.C. handled mail carried privately on a ship from an Italian port, which it placed into the French mails for onward transmission, again applying its cachet. The

example shown in Figure 4 is of mail from Messine with instruction to Claude Clerc to be forwarded (crossed through on arrival in Marseille) and sent on to Lyon with the datestamp ‘MARSEILLE / (12)’ being applied. (Usually mail handled by C.C. in this way carries their cachet but without the written forwarding instruction).

Figure 4. Letter arriving in Marseille from Messine, 1845, forwarded by Claude Clerc to the French post to be carried to Lyon.

The company also directed mail on to the commercial shipping services which upon landing in Italy would be placed in the Italian mails for delivery.

A further interesting aspect of the C.C. story is to examine their own letter headings to consider how they describe themselves. Initially this is as “Agents” for the “Service des Paquebots à Vapeur Napolitain” (as in Figures 1 and 5): the latter showing the Italian steamship company’s vessels, destinations and fares. As the company’s fleet changed so did the vessels’ names listed on the C.C. letter heading.

Subsequently they called themselves “armateurs” which indicates involvement in fitting out ships or as shipowners but there is no indication of which meaning is applicable in this case.

By January 1857 they are “Directeurs des Paquebots des Deux-Siciles à Marseille.” An interesting document shown in Figure 6 clearly shows they are now acting as agents for French companies as well as for Napolitains, with daily departures listed to the Italian ports in addition to other destinations (Corsica, north Africa, the Far East and South America) by both French and English companies.





Figure 5 (above). Claude Clerc's letterhead, lithographed by Charavel in Marseille and used in 1843, indicating that he was agent for the paqueboats bound for the Italian states. Two of the ship listed appeared on the earlier design in Figure 1, but two larger vessels have been added, the *Herculanum* at 300 horse power and the *Mongibello* at 250 (the ship that carried the letter in Figure 3).

Figure 6 (right). Claude Clerc's letterhead, printed by Marius Olive in Marseille and used in 1857, indicating that he now is arranging for mail and other freight on French as well as Neapolitan vessels, the port list greatly enlarged.



This document also raises the question, did Claude Clerc ever operate their own vessels in addition to acting as

agent for other shipping companies? The use of “directeurs des paquebots” is not in itself proof of operating a service themselves, but interestingly one service in the document refers to “nos paquebots” (our ships) and actually highlights the route (regular departures on Tuesdays and Thursdays to Naples and Palermo) with bold type and shows the departure times from Marseille (the only service so to do). This is different from the Napolitain’s service (for which C.C. remain as agents) which is also listed.

Furthermore if one examines a similar schedule of services promoted by the Marseille agent Giraud Frères (in my possession) in March 1864, the same French service is shown (albeit in the case of the Tuesday departure some five hours earlier than previously) without any emphasis being given to it, as in the C.C. schedule.

Are there any other indications that C.C. might have been more than just a shipping agent? I have correspondence from Claude Clerc headed “Services Reguliers entre Marseille, l’Italie & La Sicile” which appears to indicate the vessel “Ville de Marseille” belonging to them. This ship originally belonged to the company André et Abeille, who ceased operating in 1855.

Returning to C.C. letter headings, I have examples from the mid-1870s showing they acted as agent for the Palermo shipping company La Trinacria and when they went into liquidation in October 1876 their thirteen steamers were acquired by J & V Florio, requiring a printed sticker showing this company being affixed over ‘La Trinacria.’ (In 1881 the Florio and Rubattino firms merged to form Navigazione Generale Italiana – NGI).

If anyone has further information which may fill in further pieces of the Claude Clerc jigsaw, please don’t hesitate to get in touch with me.

As a postscript, readers may be interested to see a couple of examples of Italian entry marks applied to mail from Claude Clerc and carried by non-contract commercial ships. Figure 7a shows the “FRANCIA / VIA DI MARE” cancellation applied to a letter from Marseille to Naples sent via Genoa; Figure 7b the “grille of Rome” cancellation of eight bars in use at Civitavecchia.

Figure 7a.





Figure 7b.

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Steve Ellis, has been very active in the Postal History Society (UK) serving as Secretary. In July 2017 he convened a joint meeting with The Royal Philatelic Society and, in December, with the Forces Postal History Society at the Union Jack Club. He is the managing Director of Bridger & Kay Ltd., a family-run stamp and postal history business founded in 1897.



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The Mohawk & Hudson Railroad Carries The Mail

By Bob Bramwell

Chartered by New York State on April 17, 1826 to run between Schenectady and Albany, the Mohawk and Hudson Railroad commenced scheduled passenger service on September 24, 1831 second only to the Baltimore and Ohio's 1830 commencement. Its *raison d'être* was to allow Erie Canal passengers and area merchants to travel the 16 miles between the two cities in a hour rather than endure the canal's day-long 30 winding miles and 27 locks.

The driving force behind the Mohawk & Hudson Railroad was a scion of English aristocracy named George William Featherstonhaugh, whose surname was pronounced as if spelled "Fahnshaw" (a spelling I will use). Fahnshaw arrived in New York City in 1806 at age 26 intending to live among native tribes and learn their languages and cultures. Instead, within two years he met, courted, and won the hand of a daughter of New York City's mayor James Duane, a signer of the Articles of Confederation, important jurist, and founder of Duanesburgh in Schenectady County. Granted 1,000 acres there and a manor home, Fahnshaw farmed and dreamed of using steam power to improve productivity. From 1812, excited by the success of steam power for river navigation, he proposed rail transportation to whoever would listen, and many who would not, among New York's political elite. Together with the "Old Patroon" Stephen Van Rensselaer of great influence in Albany, the pair won the day in 1826. Unfortunately, personal tragedy prevented Fahnshaw from being part of the ultimate success of his imagined railroad.

So what was the Mohawk & Hudson Railroad?¹ Both Albany and Schenectady were cities located on riverbanks, but Schenectady was 226 feet higher than Albany.



Figure 1: The DeWitt Clinton 0-4-0 locomotive, a scale model manufactured in house by New York Central RR employs in advance of the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago, currently held at the Henry Ford Museum, Dearborn MI. [American-Rails.com]

Separating them was a plateau a hundred feet or more higher than the city centers. Laying rail on the 12 miles of plateau was not difficult, but locomotives such as the *DeWitt Clinton*² shown in Figure 1 could not power themselves, much less a train of cars, up a steep slope to get to the top of the plateau. The solution was something known as an inclined plane. The M&H inclined plane at each end of track involved installing a steam engine, a drum winch, several thousand feet of 3 inch thick woven rope cable and two sets of track laid in parallel on the steep slope of the inclined plane. Last of all, a spare freight car filled with stones sat on a siding at the top of one track of the inclined plane ready to counterbalance the weight of a passenger carriage sitting at the bottom of the inclined plane on the set of

tracks connected to the 12 miles of track. Once passengers were loaded aboard the car bound for the other city it was attached to the cable and the cable to the car full of stones, and the steam engine winch turned the drum which pulled the outbound car up the slope and lowered the weighted car down. At its destination, another steam driven winch used the same technique to lower the passengers to city level.

Understandably, many in the Capitol District around Albany followed the news about construction of the railroad as it rapidly progressed. One such person was Benjamin Maverick Mumford, a 60-year-old retiree who had moved his family from New York City to Schenectady in 1817. He had a social relationship with some of the Duane families and corresponded with Fahnschaw during early stages of the railroad project. Corresponding to his son named Jones in New York City on July 23, 1831, he wrote:

The Mohawk and Hudson Rail Road, will be in operation by the fifteenth day of August ensuing - from the summit of the Hills at Albany and Schenectady. From these two summits, the passengers will be carried, in other Carriages, to their respective places of destination - and will be brought to them from Albany and from Schenectady. By this arrangement (intended to operate until the whole line is completed) all the bad portion of the road will be avoided! And full two hours of time will be saved in the passage from Albany to this place. Even this will be a great relief to those, who are under the necessity of frequently passing between this and Albany. No road in the U. States is perhaps worse than the present one.

The Mohawk and Hudson Rail Road will be in operation by the fifteenth day of August ensuing from the summit of the Hills at Albany and Schenectady. From these two summits, the passengers will be carried, in other Carriages, to their respective places of destination – and will be brought to them from Albany and from Schenectady. By this arrangement (intended to operate until the whole line is completed) all the bad portion of the road will be avoided! And full two hours of time will be saved in the passage from Albany to this place. Even this will be a great relief to those who are under the necessity of frequently passing between this and Albany. No road in the U. States is perhaps worse than the present one.

Figure 2: Portion of the content and the cover leaf to letter from Benjamin Mumford in Schenectady to his son Samuel Jones Mumford in New York. Note in the writer's hand that the postage for the single letter, 18^{3/4}cents, be put to his account by postmaster Ryley.³

Samuel Jones Mumford Esquire
 July 23
 1831
 Wheat Street
 New York
 George Ryley will charge the postage of this letter single, to my Ac. Y.B.M.M.

Figure 3: Spring 1832 schedule of the Mohawk & Hudson Rail Road, from the Saratoga Sentinel of June 26.

In the spring of 1832, with two reliable locomotives in operation, the regular schedule of the M&H provided the service shown in Figure 3.

This and all subsequent schedules were built on the reality that passenger demand was skewed towards travel from Schenectady to Albany for government business or for travel to New York City. The schedule changed somewhat according to the season, but always bore a notice such as the following:

Passengers taking the carriages at Schenectady at 4:30 a.m. will arrive at the Albany station in season for the 7 a.m. steamboats. Those leaving at 12 noon, in ample season for the afternoon steamboats. Also those taking the locomotive at 3 p.m. will arrive at Albany in season for 4 p.m. boats.

A final point of interest is what equipment made up a train, what it carried, and what prices were charged. From its earliest days, the Mohawk & Hudson RR provided three classes of passenger accommodation because they competed with stage coaches that had established those classes decades before. The First Class cars were exactly that, stage coaches with road wheels adapted to

the rail track of the day. While stage coaches offered greater frequency, their transit took three hours in average weather and were subject to the vagaries of road conditions, whereas the railroad was noted for its smooth path, the whole way having been leveled by cuts and fills.

First Class passengers paid 62½ cents in each direction during 1832. The less fortunate could purchase a Second Class ticket for 37½ cents while “emigrants from the towboats” paid 31¼ cents. Personal baggage up to a small weight was included with the ticket price while freight was charged by the pound.

In October 1831, with the M&H newly in operation, Benjamin mentioned to his son Jones the reaction of his wife and younger children to the experience of riding in a railroad carriage:

Your Mother, Han & Tom, Mrs. Smith and daughter, went down yesterday to the Halfway House ⁴ on the Rail Road. They returned in the English Locomotive – in sixteen minutes – from the halfway house to the head of the Plane. Your Mother says she don't want to go so quick again.

Figure 4: Portion of content from Benjamin Mumford's letter to son Jones concerning his wife's reaction to riding in a rail carriage at the unimaginable speed of 22 miles per hour.

Without question, railroads were yet another technological advance offering greater speed. Since its inception, the Post Office Department had been at the center of efforts to take advantage of these advances. As inter-city wagon trails were improved as turn-pikes, the Post Office was there to claim them as Post Roads and turn stage coaches into mail coaches, to the advantage of passengers and the mails. As canals were built to tame open rivers for freight haulers, the Post Office was there to claim packet boats as part of the mail distribution system at a steady 4 miles per hour, but only in the "season of navigation" in New York State. Then when steam boats began to ply inland waterways in "the season," the Post Office claimed their routes and ports as part of the postal network as well.

We are correct to believe, therefore, that the Post Office Department had *a dog in the hunt* when the turnpikes and canal companies drew up plans to build railroads. The Post Office was always on the lookout for greater speed and security for its mails and anticipated the opportunity to bring rail under its monopoly. But, first, they had to determine that it worked. This anticipation was first expressed to the President in William T. Barry's annual report tendered November 29th 1834: "*The celerity of the mail should always be equal to the most rapid transition of the traveler. [This consideration has] always had [its] full weight upon my mind in making improvements in mail operations. The multiplication of railroads in different parts of the country promises, within a few years, to give great rapidity to the movements of travelers, and it is a subject worthy of inquiry, whether measures may not now be taken to secure the transportation of the mail upon them. Already have the railroads between Frenchtown, in Maryland, and Newcastle, in Delaware, and between Camden and South Amboy, in New Jersey, afforded great and important facilities to the transmission of the great Eastern mail*" [emphasis added]. Postmaster General Barry proceeds to iterate the details of other existing or planned railroads between Baltimore and New York City, and concludes his 1834 fiscal report with a cautionary sentiment: "*If provision can be made to secure the regular transportation of the mail upon this and upon other railroads which are constructing, and, in some instances, already finished, it will be of great utility to the public, otherwise these corporations may become exorbitant in their demands, and prove eventually to be dangerous monopolies.*"

Perhaps significantly, Barry's successor as PMG, Amos Kendall, opened his 1835 fiscal report to the President by including for the first time rail-road cars among the resources used to carry the mails. As was traditional, the number of trips per route times

the distance of each route was tabulated, totaling 25,869,486 miles. As was also traditional, this total mileage was allocated among the carriers' resources:

Four horse post coaches and two horse stages, 16,874,050 miles or 65.2%

Horses and sulkies, 7,817,973 miles or 30.2%

Steam-boats, 906,959 miles or 3.5%

Rail-road cars, 270,504 miles or 1.1%

Kendall reiterated the projection concerning the future of mails on rails: "*The multiplication of rail-roads will form a new era in the mail establishment. They must soon become the means by which the mails will be transported on most of the great lines of intercommunication, and the undersigned has devoted some attention to the devising of a system which shall render the change most useful to the country.*" He envisioned dedicated "fast trains" bypassing milk stops to the point where passenger travel on main lines would be secondary to the desires of the Post, and imagines non-stop exchange of mail bags.

Reporting his failed efforts during 1835 to obtain agreements with the several railroads operating between Washington and New York to carry the mails daily in each direction, Kendall quotes demands of \$250 and \$300 per mile per year to carry mails compared to the \$25 to \$28 per mile accepted by stage lines under a completely different business model – 6 or 7 passengers per coach versus the prospects of 60 or 70 passengers per locomotive – where the mail contract was essential to the coach but not so to the railroad.

Kendall ends this portion of his annual report bemoaning the lack of competition among railroads as compared with the presence of competition among coach lines with this: "*Indeed, the Post Office law, so far as it relates to the advertising and making of contracts, is predicated on the expectation that there would be a general competition for them, and does not provide for cases where the Department has to deal with monopolies; no such state of things having then been anticipated.*"

But obviously even in 1835 there were rail roads carrying the mail. They were the small roads where a little government money made a difference. Was the Mohawk and Hudson one of them? As it turns out, a few years later the Directors of the Mohawk & Hudson wanted to know some details of the railroad's financial history and an internal document prepared by the company Secretary survived. A reconstruction of it, showing revenue received for carrying mail separately, is shown in Figure 5.

What this shows, in addition to the level of investment in physical facilities of the railroad, is annual revenues from three sources – passenger tickets, transporting freight and carrying mails – against the total cost of operating the business. The revenues attributed to carrying mail grow from \$52 for the three remaining months of fiscal 1832 to almost \$1,900 for the calendar year before the Mohawk & Hudson enters into its first official contract with the Post Office Department effective July 1st 1837, which is the start of fiscal year 1838. As reported by Hugh Feldman in his weighty compendium *U. S. Contract Mail Routes by Railroad (1832-1875)*, pages 530-532, by 1837 the first two legs of the future Albany & Buffalo Rail Road were in operation. The M&H portion

ran 16 miles from Albany to Schenectady. The connecting Utica & Schenectady Rail Road ran 80 additional miles. Ownership of both companies was in private, but different, hands although management of the passenger and freight interchange between the two lines was collegial. The 1837-1841 contract for mail carriage treated the two lines as one, labeled Routs 541 and 541a.

	Cost of Road	Passenger \$	Freight \$	Mail \$	Operating Expense	Net \$
1832	639,908	51,675	nil	.52	27,309	24,418
1833	666,304	69,300	3,708	.594	36,752	36,850
1834	666,500	68,210	12,733	.921	50,509	30,925
1835	1,000,000	84,776	26,287	1,519	66,371	46,411
1836	1,075,000	103,470	28,185	1,889	78,650	54,694
1837	1,012,500	97,167	14,629	4,774	83,650	32,520
1838	1,100,000	101,023	19,276	5,296	84,209	41,386
1839	1,100,000	116,666	25,877	5,875	84,441	63,977

Figure 5: Revenue sources shown in a document given to the company's Directors is the only known confirmation that the Mohawk & Hudson RR carried the mails between Albany and Schenectady prior to fiscal 1838.

Feldman describes that contract as “almost unique in the manner of their remuneration, being paid on a calculation of weight of mails carried. He quotes Volume 20 of the Bid Register “*The terms contained in the Senate Bill and acceded to by the Company are as follows: One half a cent per pound for the first 200 pounds for every ten miles and for every pound over 200 for every ten miles, one fifth of a cent, and all mails less than 200 pounds to be considered as 200lb.*”

Something stands out in this table. The M&H never had more than 16 miles of track, yet it carried mail twice daily in two directions seven days per week. In Post Office terminology that represented 23,360 route-miles. Therefore, in 1839 it received only about 25 cents per route mile, but in stage coach terms it received \$367 per track mile.⁵

To demonstrate that the Mohawk & Hudson's successor organization, Erastus Corning's New York Central Rail Road, accepted the financial reporting of its operating kernel compare the passenger and freight revenues in Figure 5 above with the same categories shown in Figure 6 below. It is from Frank W. Stevens' *The Beginnings of the New York Central Railroad, A History* published to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the M&H. In its Preface, Stevens goes to great length to make the point that everything in his work was thoroughly fact-checked, and there is almost perfect conformity between the annual revenues attributed to passengers and freight even after 100 years.

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Year	Tons of Freight from		Receipts for Transportation of		Disbursements	
	Albany	Schenectady	Passengers	Freight	Passengers	Freight
			\$	\$	\$	\$
1832	—	—	21,675.47	—	27,309.94	—
1833	2,094	870	69,399.38	3,798.08	33,623.29	1,989.01
1834	5,299	11,313	68,919.31	12,733.77	37,260.53	13,095.15
1835	10,344	19,762	84,778.91	26,237.73	42,943.68	21,227.10
1836	12,366	18,577	105,470.43	28,183.67	54,857.48	23,393.16
1837	6,331	10,373	97,787.92	14,439.66	63,192.71	19,396.54
1838	8,966	11,549	101,023.94	19,276.28	64,399.66	19,119.08
1839	12,519	14,090	116,654.86	25,877.19	49,919.38	21,422.99
Total	59,373	96,524	692,893.00	130,497.71	353,976.43	196,371.37

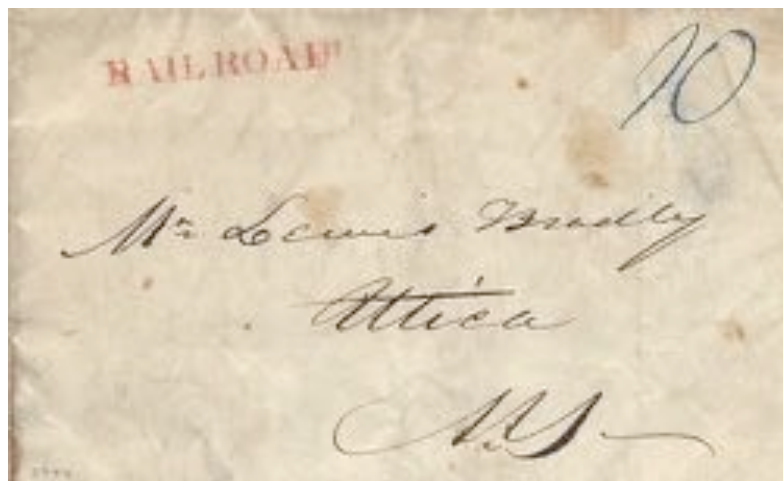
Figure 6: The 1926 centennial celebration of the Mohawk & Hudson used archival sources for an analysis of early financial results of the “kernel” road.

I have not found, and honestly do not expect to find, a Post Office Department document substantiating an 1832 agreement with the Mohawk & Hudson Rail Road to support what I would call a test use of that railroad to prove that PMG Barry was a true visionary. But Amos Kendall’s reports before 1838 contain enough references to either actual, or proposed, business arrangements with railroad companies to suggest that the Mohawk & Hudson could have been one of them. For instance, Kendall states in his 1835 report “*The Boston and Providence Rail-road Company have intimated a willingness to carry two daily mails between those cities, embracing the New York steam-boat mail, for \$2,000 a year, being at the rate of about \$25 per mile for a single mail, and a contract has been authorized*” (this authorization being given some time before June 30th 1835). And I do find 1835 references to business arrangements with the following operating railroads:

- New Jersey RR (on a great mail corridor) for \$100 per mile, proposed;
- Portsmouth and Roanoke RR a distance of 275 miles for \$26 per mile;
- Tuscumbia, Courtland & Decatur RR a distance of 45 miles for \$26 per mile.

In conclusion, it seems clear to me that railroads presented a new demand for economy of scale in operation that the Post Office Department had never experienced before. Horses, sulkies and stage lines, even steamboats, were not required to own the land on which they traveled. Railroads were. State governments could help them out in that regard, but the federal government could not. It is my opinion that the early

emergence of a privately funded railroad on a highly profitable mail route would have immediately attracted the attention of PMG Barry and been a natural object of experimentation for the Post Office Department. For that reason, I conclude that the “almost unique” basis for the 1837 contract noted in Hugh Feldman’s work on railroad mail contracts reflects a continuation of the basis on which the Mohawk & Hudson allowed the Post Office to place mail on their cars departing both Albany and Schenectady starting in 1832.



*Figure 7:
September 5,
1839 letter,
datelined
Schenectady,
NY, carried on
the Utica &
Schenectady
RR, Contract
Route 541a,
80 miles.*

Credits

This work could not have been brought to conclusion without contributions many years ago by James Ferrante, who worked for New York Central Rail Road for decades in operations and management positions. Just as importantly, Jim retired with archival material that greatly supported my interest in the Mohawk & Hudson including the copy of Stanley’s history of the road that includes page 102.

Endnotes

¹ Name as chartered. Chartered to run from downtown Albany to downtown Schenectady, which surveyed to a distance of 16 miles. Initial operating distance of 12 miles opened 1831. Full distance achieved in 1843 with route adjustments and extensions. Renamed Albany and Schenectady Rail Road in 1847. Consolidated into New York Central Rail Road in 1853.

² Original locomotive built by West Point Foundry of Cold Spring, NY, was named for deceased governor of New York DeWitt Clinton. Operational replica shown was constructed by New York Central Rail Road in 1893 to show at Columbian Exposition.

³ James Van Slyk Ryley was postmaster of Schenectady 1820 to 1837. His compensation rose from \$740 for fiscal 1831 to \$1,372 for 1837, a measure of the increasing volume of mail handled by his office. Ryley also served as county judge of Common Pleas.

⁴ Halfway House was a facility to provide fuel and water to locomotives. It was literally half way along the 12 miles of track on the plateau. “Han” and Tom were Jones’ younger siblings Hannah and Thomas.

⁵ The Post Office Department wanted carriers to meet the Department’s high standard for speed and frequency. Two deliveries each day to the offices on a route seven days (or more likely six days with one delivery on Sundays) was their hope for an important route.

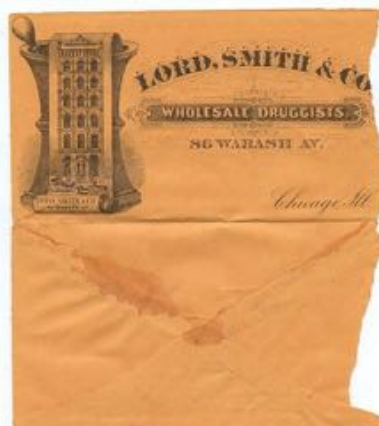
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Bob Bramwell was born in Schenectady, NY, and now specializes in its postal history with a minor in 19th century American history. He has exhibited Schenectady and written for this journal as well as *Excelsior!*, the journal of the Empire State Postal History Society.



William Frost Mobley of Englewood, Colo., sent us this [sadly mutilated] turned cover, with its letter mailed from Lone Rock, Wis., to Avoca, Wis., January 19, 1876. The illustration on the unused advertising envelope is of the building at 86 Wabash Ave. Chicago, erected by the drug firm in 1868, the year that G. W. Stoutenburgh became a partner to Thomas Lord and Dr. La-Fayette H. Smith, and the name changed from Lord & Smith to Lord, Smith & Co.

New York and The Express Mail of 1836-1839

By James W. Milgram, M. D.

Editors' Introduction

Dr. Milgram began writing about the U.S. Express Mails of 1836-1839 in 1961.¹ His full study of the subject appeared as a monograph in 1977.² This article, showcasing his remarkable collection of Express Mail rarities, focuses on New York City - the port for fully half of the country's import/export businesses. The editors take the opportunity in an afterword to put the Express Mails in context and describe how an appreciation for their history was disseminated.

The provision for an Express Mail was signed into law by Section 39 of an Act of Congress approved July 2, 1836, that otherwise reorganized the entire postal system:

Sec. 39 And be it further enacted, that in case the Postmaster General shall deem it expedient to establish an express mail, in addition to the ordinary mail, on any of the post roads in the United States for the purpose of conveying slips from newspapers in lieu of exchange newspapers, or letters, other than such as contain money, not exceeding half an ounce in weight, marked "Express Mail" and public despatches, he shall be authorized to charge all letters and packets carried by such express mail with triple the rates of postage to which letters and packets, not free, may be by law subject, when carried by the ordinary mails.

The Express Mail was the brainchild of Amos Kendall as Postmaster General. In his Annual Report to the President of December 5, 1836 he reported on the early success of the express route on the Great Mail line between New York and New Orleans: "This mail leaves far behind all news conveyed upon railroads, or by any other means. It will give unprecedented activity to commercial transactions between the North and the South. New York communicates with New Orleans in half the usual time; all enterprises are expedited; and the whole intervening country and the valley of the Mississippi will feel the impulse."³ He averred that, despite the expense (in 1838 contractors on Express routes in the South were paid 28 cents per mile compared with 5 cents for horse and sulkey, 9 2/3 cents for stage and coach, and 9 cents for railroad⁴) the Express would "produce an Income more than sufficient to support it."

The Express riders followed round-the-clock schedules and maintained a speed of between 9 and 10 miles per hour, about twice the systematic speed of the regular mail.

Instructions to the postmaster at Wheeling VA of June 17, 1837 (in advance of the Western Route through to Cincinnati inaugurated July 1, 1837 - see page) described what Express Mails would look like:⁵

You will make up the mails in firm compact bundles well wrapped and tied, and when the bundles are thin, the wrappers should be secured by sealing wax, and in all cases addressed in a large plain hand, with the name of the Office and State. - Slips from Newspapers not exceeding in each case two columns of the paper may be sent free from one publisher to another in exchange. These should be duly mailed in the most compact form. The whole mail should be secured in India rubber bags.

Author's Introduction

The Express Mail of 1836-1839 was a **postal** express - meaning that it was run on a regular schedule, as distinct to the deployment of a special messenger allowed by the Constitution.

Figure 1 is a map for the entire Express Mail routes drawn by Lester Downing, who was a student of the Express Mail. The initial route was the Great Mail route from New York to New Orleans, also called the Eastern Branch of the Express Mail (a discussion of the routes appears in sections below). Of special note is that no money letters or free franked letters were allowed.



Figure 1. Map showing all of the different routes of the Express Mail of 1836 to 1839, the Great Mail routes, the Midwestern routes, the Southwestern routes, the Western routes, and the Charleston Spur.

Express Mail Rates of Postage

As stated in the original act quoted above, all Express Mail letters had to weigh one half ounce or less. But postage in 1836 was not charged by weight alone but also by the number of sheets of paper in a letter. So a letter that contained a draft, a single enclosure, was a double letter. If there were more sheets, there was a higher rate with the maximum being a quadruple that had to weigh less than ½ oz.

The second factor in figuring postage rates was that letters were charged different rates when carried over different distances. The most common Express Mail rate was for a letter traveling over 400 miles, 25¢ x 3 = 75¢ for a single letter. A double would be \$1.50, triple \$2.25 and quadruple \$3.00. Figure 2 shows an Express Mail cover from New York to Montgomery showing the single rate. This is a letter carried entirely over a route consisting of Express Mail post offices. But a letter could originate at a post office off of the express and travel to the nearest Express Mail post office to be carried. And a letter could be delivered to a location also off of the Express Mail routes. The charge for postage included the entire mileage that the letter traveled.

Figure 2.
"NEW-YORK APR 9" (1838),
"PAID", ms
"Express Mail" and
"75" to
Montgomery,
Ala.



Figure 3 is a letter from Florida Territory to New York that had to travel to either Montgomery or Columbus to be put on the express northbound. The postage included that distance as well as the distance on the express routes.



Figure 3. "TALLAHASSEE FLOA. FEB 1, 1839" in black oval and "PAID", ms. "pr Express mail" "75" also "Due 75" to New York. The additional postage was charge for an undisclosed enclosure. Florida territorial usage (no Florida town was on an Express route), only known oval postmark and only known year dated postmark on Express Mail covers.

Another feature of an Express Mail cover is that it *always* has to have ‘express’ or ‘express mail’ on the cover. Figure 4 is a quadruple rate cover from Mobile to New York with a typical notation. From a docket on the letter we know this cover took 7 days to reach New York against the ordinary mail time of 13 days. Note also that this letter was sent unpaid, due \$3.00.



Figure 4. MOBILE A. APR 8" (1837) ms "Express mail" and "3.00" to New York arriving in 7 days. An example of an unpaid quadruple rate before required prepayment.

When discussing rates one has to include lesser distances. No Express Mail covers are known with distance less than 30 miles. Triple fees for over 30 and not over 80 miles was 30¢. The fee for a single letter to travel 80 and not over 150 miles was 37½¢. And the other short rate of less than 400 miles but over 150 miles was 18¾¢ X 3 = 56¼¢. Figures 5 to 7 show three covers from Baltimore to New York showing a single regular rate, a single Express Mail rated cover, and a double rated Express Mail usage. Figure 8 is a New York to Baltimore cover addressed to a ship's captain going to Peru which is rated at 56¼¢. The letter was delivered in Baltimore of course, at the post office. Figure 9 shows a unique triple short rate from New York to Richmond of \$1.68¾. No 30 cents or 37½ cents rate covers to or from New York are known, though there are two New York covers with \$1.12½, double the 56¼ cents short rate.



Figure 5. "BALTIMORE Md. APR 23" (1837) in red, ms "18¾" to New York, an example of a letter by regular mail between the two cities.



Figure 6. "BALTIMORE Md. APR 26" (1837) in red, ms "Express Mail" "56¼" to New York, an example of a single rate express letter.



Figure 7. "BALTIMORE Md. FEB 23" (1837), "PAID" in red, ms "Express Mail" "1.12½" to New York, an example of a double rate express letter at the 56¼ cents short rate.



Figure 8. "NEW-YORK DEC 6" (1837), "PAID" in red, ms "Express Mail single" "56¼" to a Samuel Comstock in Valparaiso or Lima in care of a merchant firm in Baltimore. It appears to have been sent by a sailing ship "Canada" to South America from Baltimore.

Figure 9. "NEW-YORK APR 5" (1837) in red, ms "Express Mail", "1.6 8¾" to Richmond, only known triple short rated cover.



Early Dates of Usage

The contracts for the different contractors of each of the routes of the Express Mail all commenced on November 15, 1836. This was for the Great Mail or Eastern Route. There are no early uses known from New York; in fact, only two 1836 uses are known from any northern city - from Boston, a town not on the express routes.

So all of the early uses are from southern cities and all the known examples go to New York. Figure 10 shows the earliest known Express Mail cover - from Mobile to New York on November 17, 1836. Amos Kendall asked for reports on the Express Mail use from certain important cities in 1838 in order to report on the success of the service. Figure 11 shows the original summary the postmaster at Mobile sent to Kendall (this is from Kendall's personal papers). Note that the first mail was dispatched from Mobile on November 15, 1836. This document also shows that the peak usage of the service was from January through March, 1837.

The above extract from my accounts of mails sent exhibit the amount of Postage on letters sent from this office to New York and Philadelphia by Express Mail, on each day, from the 24th November, 1836 (when the first express mail was dispatched) to the 30th of September 1837 inclusive. Post Office New Orleans 21st March 1838 Wm. H. Kerr, P.M.

Figure 12 shows a cover mailed from New Orleans to New York on November 24, 1836, a first day for the Express Mail from New Orleans. There are other covers known during November, 1836 from both Mobile and New Orleans to New York.

Figure 12. "NEW ORLEANS La. NOV 24" (1836), "PAID" in blue, "Express Mail" "Charge box 653" "75" single rate to New York, a first day of Express Mail usage from New Orleans. The postage was charged to a box account.



One other early use is known, a very handsome cover from Montgomery to New York with November 23, 1836 dating (Figure 13). Since Mobile covers are known before this date, one has to suppose that Montgomery started dispatching Express Mail pouches as soon as Mobile. But this is the earliest date with December 17, 1836 being the second earliest express cover from Montgomery.



Figure 13. "MONTGY. AL. NOV 23" (1836), "PAID" in red, ms "pr Express Mail," "75" to New York, very early Express Mail use.

After early dates the next most important date for the express is November 1, 1837. On that date it was required to prepay the postage on an Express Mail letter. Members of the Executive Department and Members of Congress had been receiving these letters which could not go free. Paying the high rates on such letters was considered a nuisance and complaints were made to the Post Office Department. Therefore, this is the first postal service requiring prepayment of letter postage. Figure 14 is a Mobile cover going to New York paying the postage on the first day of required payment. There are a few covers that went unpaid for a short time after November 1, but then the express service was refused if prepayment was not made.

Figure 14.
"MOBILE A
NOV
1" (1837) two
strikes of blue
"PAID,"
"Express
Mail," "75"
to New York
on the first day
of required
prepayment of
Express Mail
fees.



The Great Mail Route (Eastern Branch)

It is customary to describe Express Mail covers by the routes over which they traveled (see map Figure 1).⁶ All covers from New England had to travel to New York to start on the first leg of express service. As was mentioned individual contractors were responsible for the service in different sections of the country. The Post Office Department determined the route numbers in the original advertisements for contracts. Figure 15 is a table with the numbers of the route at the left, the termination points of the route, and the dates of inception and the dates of termination of each route. This is most useful when referring to any single cover to understand the usage. Most of the covers already shown have all been examples over the Eastern (Great Mail) routes.

Figure 16 is a cover from Richmond to New York which shows the double short rate $56\frac{1}{4}\text{¢} \times 2 = \$1.12\frac{1}{2}$. Richmond was the southern endpoint on Route 5a of the express, so a letter from there traveled entirely by the express service. Figure 17 shows a very interesting cover originating at New York on January 12, 1837 and carried by Express Mail to Augusta, Ga. (also on the route) for 75 cents single rate. There it was forwarded to Savannah, Ga. by post. An additional $12\frac{1}{2}\text{¢}$ was added to the 75¢ resulting in a total postage due of $87\frac{1}{2}\text{¢}$. Only two Express Mail letters show forwarding after hav-

Number of Route	Towns	Commencement	Termination	Comment
The Southern Route				
1	New York-Philadelphia			Never solely an express route
2	Philadelphia-Boston	November 15, 1836	January 31, 1838	
3	Baltimore-Washington	November 15, 1836	January 31, 1838	
4	Washington-Fredricksburg	November 15, 1836	March 31, 1838	
5	Fredricksburg-White Chinnys	November 15, 1836	March 31, 1838	
5a	White Chinnys-Richmond	November 15, 1836	March 31, 1838	
6	Richmond-Petersburg	November 15, 1836	March 31, 1838	
7	Petersburg-Bikely Depot	November 15, 1836	April 11, 1838	Termination changed from Bikely Depot to Gaston June 10, 1837 See above
7a	Bikely Depot-Louisburg	November 15, 1836	January 1, 1839	
8	Louisburg-Raleigh	November 15, 1836	January 1, 1839	
9	Raleigh-Columbia	November 15, 1836	January 1, 1839	
10	Columbia-Milledgeville	November 15, 1836	July 1, 1839	Express service terminated at Augusta January 1, 1839
11	Milledgeville-Columbia	November 15, 1836	July 1, 1839	
12	Columbia-Montgomery	November 15, 1836	July 1, 1839	
13	Montgomery-Mobile	November 15, 1836	July 1, 1839	
14	Mobile-New Orleans	November 24, 1836	July 1, 1839	Never solely an express route
Branch to Charleston, South Carolina				
15	Columbia-Charleston	July 1, 1837	January 1, 1839	Subsided line opening date on May 11, 1837
The Western Route				
16	Washington-Fredrick	July 1, 1837	May 1, 1838	
17	Fredrick-Cumberland	July 1, 1837	May 1, 1838	
18	Cumberland-Cumtows	July 1, 1837	May 1, 1838	
19	Cumtows-Wheeling	July 1, 1837	May 1, 1838	
20	Wheeling-Zanesville	July 1, 1837	May 1, 1838	
21	Zanesville-Columbus	July 1, 1837	May 1, 1838	
22	Columbus-Dayton	July 1, 1837	May 1, 1838	
23	Dayton-Cincinnati	July 1, 1837	May 1, 1838	
24	Cincinnati-Indianapolis	October 1, 1837	May 1, 1838	
25	Indianapolis-Terre Haute	October 1, 1837	May 1, 1838	
26	Terre Haute-Vandalia	December 10, 1837	May 1, 1838	
27	Vandalia-St. Louis	December 10, 1837	May 1, 1838	
28	Cincinnati-Georgetown	October 1, 1837	May 1, 1838	Routes 26-27 may have commenced operations in September
29	Georgetown-Louisville	October 1, 1837	May 1, 1838	
30	Louisville-Cincinnati	October 1, 1837	January 15, 1838	
31	Cincinnati-Nashville	October 1, 1837	January 15, 1838	
32	Nashville-Huntsville	October 1, 1837	July 1, 1838	
33	Huntsville-Elyton	October 1, 1837	July 1, 1838	
34	Elyton-Montgomery	October 1, 1837	July 1, 1838	

Figure 15. Table listing all of the individual official routes with their numbers, towns at the two ends of the route, dates of origin, and dates of termination.

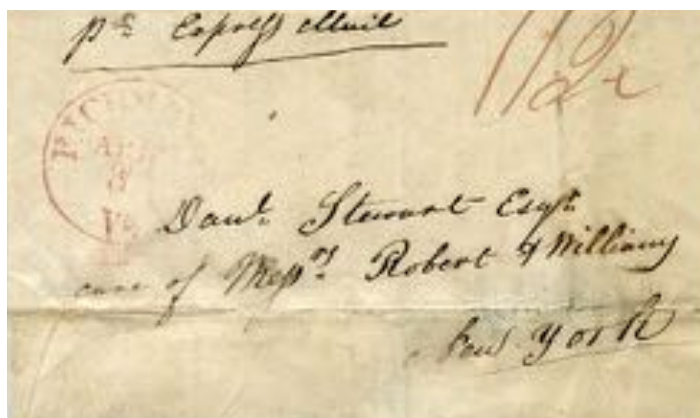


Figure 16.
"RICHMOND Va.
APR 3" (1837) in
red, "Express
Mail" and "1.12½"
to New York, an
example of a double
short rate to New
York.

ing been missent and one of them went to New York (Figure 18). This cover was carried from a fort in Florida Territory and was mailed at Savannah at the single rate, PAID 75¢. It was addressed to Washington, but by accident it was sent to New York. Here it was postmarked only 6 days later and marked “MISSENT” and forwarded to Washington, presumably in the express pouch.



Figure 17. “NEW-YORK JAN 7” (1837) in red, ms “Express Mail” “75” in black ink, red ms “Fowd 12½” and “87½” total postage, red “AUGUSTA Ga. JAN 12” forwarded to Savannah.



Figure 18. “SAVANNAH GEO. JUL 14” (1838) and “PAID” in red, ms “Express Mail/ P.S.” [public service] and “75” sent from Fort Heilman in Florida Territory to Washington. However the cover was missent with “NEW-YORK JUL 20” and “MISSENT” in red box. There was no charge for missent covers.

Most New York covers went to Mobile or New Orleans. The cover in Figure 19 only went as far as Raleigh, N.C. However, this was still over 400 miles from New York so the maximum single rate of postage was charged.



Figure 19.
"NEW-YORK
MAR
10" (1838),
"PAID" in red,
"ms "Express
mail," "75" to
Raleigh, N.C.,
an example of a
shorter distance
still under the
over 400 miles
single rate of 75
cents.

Midwestern Route

Referring to the table in Figure 15 one can see that the Midwestern Route, Washington to Cincinnati, opened on July 1, 1837 = over half a year after the Eastern Route. These are express routes 15 through 20 and there are no known New York letters traveling west on these routes. Figure 20 shows a cover from Cincinnati traveling by express east to New York in 1838.

Figure 20.
"CINCINNATI O.
FEB 2" (1838),
"PAID" in red, ms
"Express Mail,"
"Paid 75" to New
York, carried on
Midwestern Branch
and Eastern Branch.



Southwestern Route

Shortly after opening the routes to Cincinnati a series of routes were opened to connect that city through Kentucky and Tennessee to Montgomery. Letters could travel north or south from the originating city on the express. The cover in Figure 21 might have traveled by the Southwestern Route although it might have been sent to New Orleans. It is considered one of two fancy cancellations on an Express Mail cover, a rimless "MONTICELLO MI Dec 10" (1837).. No New York covers have been reported with a destination along these routes.



Figure 21.
"MONTICELLO
MI. Dec
10" (1837) without
outer circle, ms
"Express Mail"
and "Paid 75¢"
with the Tallahas-
see oval one of the
two fancy cancels
used on Express
Mail covers.

Two very interesting covers made a round trip from New York to New York. One of these is a single rated cover shown in Figure 22. It began as Express Mail from New York on May 22, 1838 "PAID 75:" to New Orleans. Then it went by regular mail to Natchez, Mississippi. However, the addressee had moved on (there are a number of covers to Mr. Peck in different locations), and the letter appears to have been sent by steamboat to Cincinnati. On June 15 it was put back into the regular mails and sent collect "25" to New York again. The other similar cover is a double rated letter with the same dates in the two postmarks. However, the manuscript express notation reads "Express via N.O. paid".



Figure 22. "NEW-YORK MAY 22" (1838) in red, ms "Express Paid Single" and "75' to New Orleans by express and then regular mail to Natchez sent in care of business firm. There the letter was forwarded to New York care of a different firm. The letter was carried out of the mails to Cincinnati. There it was put back into the mail with "CINCINNATI O. JUN 15," ms "25" (not paid) and crossed out former notations. Thus it made a round trip to New York.

Western Route

The last routes of the Express Mail were those on the Western Branch. As can be seen in Figure 15 routes 30 to 33 opened either October 1 or December 10, 1837 and were open only for about six months closing May 1, 1838. All surviving letters along this line are quite rare. Figure 23 shows a St. Louis to New York cover paying a double rate in January, 1838.



Figure 23. "ST. LOUIS MO. JAN 15" (1838) "PAID" in black and "\$1.50" in ms. "Express Mail" in ms. addressed to New York, double rate over Western routes to Dayton, Midwestern routes, and Eastern routes north from Washington.

Handstamped Markings

Only a few towns used a handstamp to assign a letter to the express service. One of these is Columbia S.C. from which the cover in Figure 24 originated with a red oval "EXPRESS MAIL" This cover was addressed to New York. Another letter, Figure 25



Figure 24. "COLUMBIA S.C. NOV 14" (1837), "PAID" and oval "EXPRESS MAIL/ U.S." in red, ms. "Express mail" (by sender), "75" to New York.

addressed to New York, is probably the greatest Express Mail cover, the unique Haynesville, Ala. (near Montgomery) straight line “EXPRESS MAIL 75” in black. This cover like so many others must have had an undisclosed enclosure because it was marked “Due 75” at some point along the line to New York. There is an earlier Express Mail cover from this town also to New York in September, 1837 without the straight line but sent at the same 75 cent rate, so the straight line must have been devised later.



Figure 25. “HAYNESVILLE AL. SEP 12” (1838), “PAID” and “EXPRESS MAIL 75” all in black, ms “75” and “Due 75” (for undisclosed enclosure), handstamped designation and rate marking.

Express Mail by Ship

In the period of the Express Mail ship mail was common along the Atlantic and Gulf coastline. A two cent fee was paid to the ship’s captain when he took a letter to the Post Office.

Express Mail letters with SHIP combinations are known from three cities, one of them New York itself. All known ship letters involve unpaid postage and therefore date from before November 1, 1837 when prepayment was required.. The most unusual is the cover in Figure 26 which is a short rated cover at the 56¼¢ rate for 150 to 400 miles New York to Richmond with a 2¢ ship fee = 58¼¢ due. Other New York ship 77¢ covers exist. Cuban merchants did a thriving commission business with New York, Mobile and New Orleans. The Moses Taylor correspondence contained a number of covers demonstrating ship mail. Figure 27 shows an example of a single rate plus the two cents for a 77¢ from Charleston and there are similar covers with single, double and quadruple rates from New Orleans as well as triple and quadruple rates from Charleston. However, Figure 28 shows a cover originating on Cuba and sent to New York via New Orleans that arrived at New Orleans on November 20, 1837 and was meant to be sent

by Express Mail. But this was after required prepayment of the express postage, so the postmaster crossed out the notation “pr Express Mail” and sent this double rated letter at “52” for 50¢ (2x25¢) plus 2¢ ship fee.



Figure 26.
“NEW-YORK SHIP JUN 12” (1837) in red, ms “per Express Mail,” “pr Orpheus” and “58¾” to Richmond, a short rate ship usage, only example known.

Figure 27.
“CHARLESTON S.C. MAR 18” (1837) and “SHIP” in red, ms. “Express Mail,” “pr ‘Catherine’ via Charleston” and “77” to New York, a single rate ship usage from Cuba.



One other type of ship mail needs to be mentioned. At this time in the late 1830s Texas was an independent nation. The Express Mail could be used to send a letter from a city on the Great Mail route to Texas. Figure 29 shows a cover from New York mailed January 6, 1838 and paying the single express rate of 75¢ to New Orleans. There the cover was sent to J. Brent Clarke of New Orleans, who entrusted it to be forwarded by an independent forwarder, Sam Ricker, Jr. Ricker sent it by private ship to Galveston. Then it was postmarked “Galveston Jany 24/38 Ship 31¼¢ (25¢ + 6¼¢)” but then someone realized that the addressee was the Surgeon General of Texas who had free frank privileges in Texas so the letter was rerated “free.” There are three similar Hart-

ford, Conn. covers going by Express Mail with Ricker markings, each of which traveled to New York to be put into the Express Mail.



Figure 28. "NEW OR-LEANS La. NOV 20" (1837" and "SHIP" in blue, ms "per Express Mail" crossed out and "52" to New York, double rate with ship fee, not express because not prepaid.



Figure 29. "NEW-YORK JAN 6" (1838) and "PAID" in red, ms "Express Mail" and "75" addressed to Dr Ashbel Smith Surgeon Genl Texean Army City of Houston Texas care of N. Orleans agent. Large double black oval "SAM RICKER JR /AGENT OF THE TEXIAN POST OFFICE/ NEW ORLEANS." At Galveston postmarked in ms. "Galveston Jany 24/38," "Ship" and "31¼," the latter crossed out with "free" added.

European Destinations

Domestic mail was sent to Europe chiefly through two ports, Boston and New York. An incoming letter might show the ship markings just discussed. An outgoing

letter would have the domestic postage paid with the transportation by ship later charged to the recipient. Figure 30 shows a letter sent from Augusta, Ga. June 16, 1838 by Express Mail paid 75¢ “pr ‘Great Western’ from New York to Bristol England” with destination in Scotland. The cover went by the new steamer “Great Western” from New York June 25 to Bristol. The charge of “1/6” was changed to “1/11” for the 8p ship fee plus 1/3 to Scotland. This was the first ship charging a 25¢ freight money fee, but the fee was waived on this letter.



Figure 30. “AUGUSTA Ga. JUN 16” (1838) and “PAID” in red, ms “Express Mail Paid No. 34 A.J.” (P.O. box), “75” (no freight money charge) and “pr “Great Western” from New York to Bristol, England.” addressed to Greenwich N.B. (Scotland). At New York posted “NEW-YORK JUN 22” (6 days by express). Marked in pen “1/6” revalued to “1/11.”

Figure 31 shows a cover to France. It was also sent by Express Mail from New Orleans paid \$1.50 double rate to New York. On January 13, 1838 it was sent to Havres (black rectangle) and was charged 10 decimes at Lyons (1 decimes sea tax plus 9 decimes postage).

Figure 31. “NEW OR-LEANS La. JAN 5” 1838), “PAID,” ms “Malle Ex-press” (Express Mail), “1.50” double rate to New York, red “NEW-YORK JAN 13” (date left on ship, not date of arrival), black Havres marking and ms “10.”



Handstamped private forwarders also sent mail through New York to Europe. They appeared to do this as a service because there is no indication of any prepayment for their efforts. There is also a cover with a Charleston forwarder sending a ship letter from Cuba to New York.

The final transatlantic service on Express Mail covers was that of charging freight money for the service of a steamer. The only known Express Mail cover showing this usage is shown in Figure 32. Freight money fees were charged by transatlantic steamship companies beginning in June, 1838. This cover is a very late use of the Express Mail in June, 1839, the last month of express service. The postmaster at New Orleans wrote a rate of 75¢ for the express and also wrote “freight” and “25¢”. Both rates were paid together at the time of mailing. The notation “To be forwarded pr steam ship Great Western” is at lower left. Nine days later it was postmarked at New York when it was sent by the steamer to Great Britain. There is a black “BRISTOL/ SHIP LETTER” and “1/5” for 8d ship letter plus 9d postage from Bristol to London. An additional feature of this cover is that it enclosed a publisher’s slip about cotton fraud, the only example of a slip as an enclosure recorded by Express Mail (though slips were, by design of the Express Mail system, carried separately).



Figure 32. “NEW ORLEANS La. JUN 2” (1839), “PAID” in red, ms “pr Express to New York,” “To be forwarded for Steam Ship Great Western,” “75,” “freight” and “25” all in red pen, red “NEW YORK JUN 11” to London. British markings are straight lines “BRISTOL SHIP LETTER” and ms. “1/5” (8d ship letter 9d postage).

Discontinuance of the Express Mail

The Express Mail came into existence just as the railroads were beginning. A number of specific express routes were railroad routes from the beginning. But as the railroad network spread, a more dependable and swift method of transporting letters was

PAID 1874
J. H. HAYES
Care of New York & Co.
PAID
RECEIVED MAR 13 1874

The formal end of the express was in July, 1839 although many of the separate routes had already been discontinued before that date. The latest known cover paying an express fee from Mobile is shown in Figure 34. On July 3, 1839 this cover left Mobile for New York but it did not arrive for 10 days, so the sender did not gain much for his money. In 1837 it took typically 6 or 7 days for a similar letter to reach New York.



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But for a specific period of time the Express Mail was successful in carrying a fast mail for those who would pay the special high rates.

Endnotes

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Editors' Afterword

Contextualizing statements about the Express Mails have been made from different points of view.

Philatelic

Delf Norona was the first to describe the Express Mails to the collecting community, in 1929.⁷ He began with the documentary evidence from Acts of Congress, Post Office Department contracts, and the contents of three letters from the 1st Assistant Postmaster General to the postmaster at Wheeling VA - the latter providing the description of how Express Mail was to be treated, quoted in the introduction above. Norona's major articles in 1943 put this postal Express in the context of expresses, including military. He also described each of the Express Mail routes of 1836-1839 in detail. In a follow-up article, as well as in correspondence with the editor, Mr. Norona described meeting with the postal librarian, W.P. Zantzinger, and took credit for the visit leading to the Express Mail being considered one of the principal accomplishments of the Post Office Department, noted in signage on the General Post Office building in DC, dedicated June 11, 1934.⁸

News Dissemination

Private letters carried by the Express Mail have dominated collector interest, but public news was the reason for the accelerated service - "the primary purpose of these expresses was to carry news of price fluctuations, especially for the cotton market, and to expedite the dissemination of news by carrying special news slips instead of bulky newspapers generally exchanged by most printers."⁹ The slips encouraged local publishers to reprint the news.

Richard Kielbowicz delineated the variety of interests served by the Express Mails: "Commodity producers sought better channels of market intelligence; publishers, especially those in New York City, wanted government-subsidized news relays; and the Jacksonian postmaster general had been looking for some way to keep city dailies from competing directly with rural weeklies."¹⁰

Political/Economic

Richard John noted: "A capable administrator, Kendall restored the postal system to financial solvency within less than two years, effectively eliminating postal finance

as a political issue.”¹¹ The Express Mail was explained by a surplus of postal revenue attributed to a commercial boom - but with no consideration of the Panic of 1837 and the conjunction of the ‘bank wars’ with the reorganization of the postal service.

Kendall’s putting the Post Office Department on solid financial footing belongs to the back story of Express Mails. He had been Auditor of the Treasury Department, and brought that expertise to solving the mess that borrowing from banks to pay postal contractors had produced. Kendall introduced a system of quarterly “collection orders” that accounted for all the money due the Post Office each quarter, made the funds available to pay the contractors, and divided the post offices into three classes: First or Collection Offices, Second or Depositing Offices and Third or Draft Offices. Postmasters no longer sent money directly to the Department, nor deposited it in banks. A system of receipts from postmasters and contractors along with the postmasters’ quarterly returns provided the clerks at the General Post Office with the information needed to maintain the book-keeping records, while the money stayed in the field where it was needed.¹²

President Jackson’s third term was dominated by the ‘bank wars’ - the rescinding of the charter of the Bank of the United States, and, on July 11, 1836, a “specie circular” issued by the Secretary of the Treasury required federal land agents to accept only gold or silver payments for public lands. Altogether, the monetary crisis “had its roots in a widespread over investment in internal improvement projects and a speculative mania connected with the occupation and sale of public lands.”¹³ This situation became a “Panic” with unprecedented speed.

Dr. Milgram’s group of Express Mail letters shows that this accelerated service contributed to the spread of the panic. Referring to the chart, Figure 11 on page, one can see that the aggregate of postage recorded for Express Mails from Mobile to New York for the four quarters beginning with the one ending December 31, 1836 shows a marked increase in the quarter ending March 31, 1837 (from \$2,770 to \$7,505). Moreover, from the sample of letters illustrated in this article, 16 of the 19 carried on the Southern route to New York were mailed before the panic. Businessmen (particularly Abraham Bell’s associates in this sample) were willing to pay three times regular postage to communicate what they were hearing about the fiscal crisis. Import surpluses from England in the 1830s had put private business in debt to English investors. Shortly after hearing of the specie circular, the Bank of England instructed to reject the paper of several banks. English demand for cotton dwindled and prices fell. In March 1837 three of New York’s cotton firms failed. Throughout April and early May, the New Orleans press recorded dismal business and money market forecasts as well as stories of bank failures in New York, Boston, and providence. Full-blown panic arrived on May 10 when all but three New York banks suspended specie payments - and such suspensions spread quickly across the country from there (no doubt aided by the Express Mails).

Kendall was historically anti-bank. In the wake of the suspensions pointed to his success with the Post Office Department system of handling all revenues ‘in-house’ and recommended President Van Buren extend it to the entire government.¹⁴

Postmasters passed on the reminder to their patrons. The Springfield MA postmaster had the May 16 circular reprinted and mailed it out on May 30 with his own words added. [See Figure 2]

Figure 2.



Postmasters who had been depositing in banks were directed to hold the proceeds of their office until further orders - the postmaster of Wheeling VA wrote to Kendall (before the inauguration of an Express Mail that would serve him) asking if he had to change his quarterly reporting as well, and added: "I have the pleasure to inform you the Northwestern Bank continues to redeem her Notes with Specie and the Directors assure me they will continue to do so." [See Figure 3]

Figure 3.

Post Office Building &
May 17th 1837

Gov. James Kendall

Sir

Yours of the 13th directing me
to take the proceeds of this Office on my hand
and take further action as duty required. You also
direct me to report in the first day of every
month the sum of the net income of the
preceding month. Please to inform me if it
is necessary to report as I have done heretofore
monthly without making out an account
thereof except at the end of the quarter.

I have the pleasure to inform you that the
Western Bank continues to receive for notes
with specie and the Deposits Agency meeting
will continue to do so.

I am respectfully
Yours &c. &c.
Rich^d M. Chase

In a report to Congress of September 4, 1837, PMG Kendall reviewed his sending out the circular, and his removal of the finances of the POD from banks.

Postal Network

In December 1836 the General Post Office building in Washington burned to the ground, destroying contract and other records. It was a measure of how robust the

postal network was after The Postal Reorganization Act earlier in the year that service continued nationwide without an interruption.

On May 1, 1837, Amos Kendall ordered that the official seal of the Post Office Department portray “a Post Horse in speed, with Mail-bags and rider, encircled by the words Post Office Department, United States of America.” This insignia served the POD until 1970. (See Figure 4.) The “speed” is what links this to the Express Mails. Ordinary horse mail (whether with a single rider, with a wagon or sulkey or coach) was scheduled to operate at 4 to 5 miles per hour - not a gallop. But the Post Office express-es were scheduled for twice the speed.



Figure 4. Draft, printed by Tanner in Philadelphia, on postmaster Orvis Hall at Warren PA, signed Amos Kendall as PMG. Clark Ferry is to be paid \$145 on December 21, 1837 according to Kendall's new accounting system (Ferry, who signs this draft on the reverse, appears in the 1839 Official Register as a contractor in the state of Pennsylvania earning \$464 a year). The galloping horse insignia here is similar to the newly-ordered official seal of the POD.

Special Post Offices and Special Post Routes - a service organized locally but agreed to by the POD - allowed for the postal network to expand at no cost. A local postmaster and special post rider agreed to operate an office and its supply for whatever revenue was collected. These offices proliferated in the late 1830s, adding self-sufficiency of the network, keeping, as Kendall had desired, both news and money local.

Footnotes to Editors' Introduction and Afterword

¹ James W. Milgram, “Express Mail Usages, 1836-1839” *The American Philatelist* January 1961 Vol 74 No 4; followed by “Additional Findings Noted” January 1963 Vol 76 No 4.

² James W. Milgram, *The Express Mail of 1836-1839*, Collectors Club of Chicago 1977.

³ *Appendix to the Congressional Globe*, December 5, 1836. “Report of the Postmaster General,” 24th Congress 2d Session. Page 10.

- ⁴ S.R. Hobbie of the Contract Office, *Report of the Postmaster General* December 3, 1838.
- ⁵ As quoted by Delf Norona, page 723, *The American Philatelist* August 1929.
- ⁶ Delf Norona, "The Express Mail" *The American Philatelist*, August 1929; followed by "The Express Mail of 1836 to 1839" September 1943 Vol 56 No 12, and "Further Notes" in October 1943 Vol 57 No 1.
- ⁷ Delf Norona to Robert Dalton Harris, August 12, 1972.
- ⁸ Carl H. Scheele, *A Short History of the Mail Service*, Smithsonian Institution 1970, page 69.
- ⁹ Richard B. Kielbowicz, *News in the Mail, The Press, Post Office, and Public Information, 1700-1860s*, Westport CT 1989. Page 167. The chapter is called "The Eastern Pony Express 1836-1839" a nickname Kielbowicz discovered in Norona's articles where mention was made of Ward E. Hinman who had produced a mimeographed brochure "Express Mail 1836-1839 - The First Pony Express."
- ¹⁰ Richard R. John, *Spreading the News: The American Postal System from Franklin to Morse*, Harvard 1995, page 247.
- ¹¹ David L. Straight, "The Geography of Money: The Post Office Collection Order Network, 1823-1880" *Geography & Postal History, Papers from "A Writers' Institute" Summer Seminar 2011*, West Sand Lake 2012.
- ¹² Allan R. Pred, *Urban Growth and the Circulation of Information: The United States System of Cities 1790-1840*, Harvard 1973. Page 247 and following. See the review of this book by Robert Dalton Harris, *P.S. a quarterly journal of postal history*, No. 2 May 1977.
- ¹³ Donald B. Cole, *A Jackson Man: Amos Kendall and the Rise of American Democracy*, Baton Rouge 2004.

Dr. James W. Milgram, an orthopedic surgeon, is very active in The Collectors Club of Chicago. He has written several books focusing on 19th century postal history - his most recent, *American Illustrated Letter Stationery 1819-1899*, was previewed in *PHJ* 164, June 2016.

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UPU Monument Iconography

By Diane DeBlois

Richard John, Professor of History and Communications at Columbia University, and author of the 1995 award-winning history of the U.S. postal service, *Spreading the News*, recently became interested in the iconography of the Universal Postal Union. He presented on the topic to the Collectors Club of New York in April 2017, and will be part of a panel on international organizations at the World Economic History Congress in Boston this summer.

He finds it significant that this backbone of global communication was denominated 'universal' not international or global, and that a single icon has never represented it. He believes that the obscurity has been deliberate, in an attempt to be seen to lack any political agenda.

However, the most common image associated with the organization - at least since 1909 - is the monument erected in Berne, Switzerland where the UPU had been headquartered since 1874. A special Postal Union Congress in Berne in 1900 voted to collaborate with the Swiss government to produce a monument. The French sculptor and self-proclaimed utopian visionary Rene de Saint Marceaux [1845-1915] won an international competition for the assignment, calling his design "Autour du Monde."

Funding came from the Postal Union, the Swiss federal council, and the German government whose postal administrators had initiated the idea.



Figure 1. Cover sent through the French post to Canada, bearing a 2009 stamp designed by Sylvia Brullhardt to honor Rene de Saint-Marceaux and his statue on its centenary. Figure 1a: First Day cancellation for the stamp.

The monument has two main bronze sculptural elements embedded in granite. On one side reclines a female figure, the personification of the city of Berne, wearing a crenellated city wall as a crown and embracing the city coat of arms. The more dynamic element is a terrestrial globe encircled by dancing figures representing the five continents, linked by letters they are holding out to one another.



Figures 2 & 3: Swiss postcards contemporary with the monument's dedication, one showing the whole sculptural arrangement, and a detail of a second showing the continental figures more clearly.



Figure 4: First day of issue, October 10, 1949 for the UPU commemorative 3d and 2 1/2d, to pay the 5d surface mail rate from England to the U.S.



Figure 5: UPU commemoratives, 3d and 1 shilling denominations, to pay airmail from England to the U.S.

Figure 6: Letter from California to a passenger on board the steamship *Stella Polaris*, carried by the 10c UPU commemorative for domestic airmail (to the east coast) and the 15c for airmail across the Atlantic, where it was forwarded twice to return to the U.S.



Figure 7: Another letter to a steamship passenger, but originating on the east coast, in South Carolina, and so needing just the international airmail 15c UPU commemorative.

According to some students of postage iconography, the Berne statue has appeared on over 800 stamps. The first group were in response to a UPU idea that its 75th anniversary in 1949 should be commemorated by all the member countries. Britain led the way with a basic design featuring, on the 3d, the Bern UPU statue and King George VI, that would be overprinted for use in British Postal Agencies overseas. Higher values referenced the global reach of the UPU.



Figure 8: A 1952 letter (perhaps enclosing photographs) from Alaska to Switzerland, airmail both domestic and international paid with two 15 cent UPU commemoratives.



Figure 9: Souvenir engraving prepared for MILCOPEX in celebration of the 75th anniversary of the UPU. The Berne statue is paired with a block of four of the “World encircled by doves bearing messages” 15 cent stamps from 1949.

The United States design put the Berne statue as a celestial apparition above the new Post Office Department building in D.C. on the 10c denomination, and replaced the human figures with birds holding letters while circling the globe on the 15c. The connection between the statue and the birds was made more explicit when the design was honored 25 years later on the centenary of the UPU.



Figure 10: Detail from a Cuban cigar box label, late 19th century, with both Cupid and a passenger pigeon aiding the delivery of mail by railway and steamship around the world - the countries symbolized by their postage stamps.



Figure 11: Chromolithographed image from a patent medicine pamphlet ca.1910, with idealized female figures representing the continents, the globe in the background reinforcing the slogan that the cough medicine was "endorsed by all nations."



Figures 12 & 13: Postage stamps from 1949, the example from Bahawalpur cropping the Berne statue image to emphasize the globe.



Figures 14 & 15: Postage stamps from 1960 with the Berne globe freed from the rest of the statue.

The design of the 15c stamp proved the more enduring in American philatelic circles. When the next big UPU anniversary was commemorated, it resurfaced in a souvenir engraving (Figure 9).

As a cultural icon, representing communication circling the globe had many antecedents, as did representing the continents with five figures.

Stamp designers were more apt to show the entire Berne statue for the 1949 commemoration, but thereafter tended to ‘crop’ the image of the Berne statue to emphasize the figures circling the world with letters.

American Postal History in Other Journals

By Ken Grant

Many articles on U.S. postal history are published each month. In order to present a useful survey of recent publications, we adopt a rather narrow definition of postal history and present what is more an index than a literary endeavor. Unlike an index, however the present listing contains very little cross-referencing; so that a reader interested in trans-Atlantic mail should check each geographical location from which such mail might have originated. Editors not finding their publication reviewed here need only make sure the publication is available to the U.S. Associate Editor, Ken Grant at E11960 Kessler Rd., Baraboo WI 53913.

General Topics

Air Mail

Douglas N. Clark provides a census of street car RPO airmail covers in his article "News from the Cities." *Trans. Post. Coll.* 68 No. 4 (June-August 2017).

Auxiliary Markings

John M. Hotchner focuses on custom duty markings in "Customs Duty Markings on Incoming Covers Part Two: The 1940s." *LaPosta* 48 No. 3 (Third Quarter 2017).

"Burlington Special Delivery Receipt Markings" by Terrence Hines discusses four types of Special Delivery Receipt Markings in use in Burlington, Vermont between 1973 and 1984. *Vermont Phil.* 62 No. 3 (August 2017).

Nancy B. Clark's "Interrupted" looks at auxiliary markings used on mail with impeded passage on mobile post offices. *Trans. Post. Coll.* 68 No. 4 (June-August 2017).

John M. Hotchner looks at mail sent with coins affixed as payment in "Post Office Handling of Coin Covers Could Result in Postage Due Markings, But Mostly Don't." *LaPosta* 48 No. 4 (Fourth Quarter 2017).

Civil War

Thomas Lera and Deane R. Briggs discuss Florida's final notable Civil War battle in "Florida's Important Civil War Battles Part 2: Natural Bridge. *Fla. Post. Hist. J.* 24 No. 3 (September 2017).

The "Orange Spring(s) Post Office" by Thomas Lera and Deane R. Briggs traces the history of that postal operation. Orange Springs served as a supply hub for the Confederacy. *Fla. Post. Hist. J.* 24 No. 3 (September 2017).

Patricia A. Kaufman's "A 'Wanna-Be' Confederate Cover to Postmaster John Glymph" focuses on a cover with a straight-line Free marking and an altered postmark. *LaPosta* 48 No. 3 (Third Quarter 2017).

"The Story Behind Two Union Covers" by Wayne Anmuth looks at two Rockville, Maryland patriotic covers. *LaPosta* 48 No. 3 (Third Quarter 2017).

The back sides of court documents were used to create envelopes mailed from Marietta, Georgia in Steve Swains article, "Civil War Adversity Covers – Necessity and Invention." *Ga. Post Roads* 26 No. 1 (Winter 2018).

“Aaron Huggins – A Galvanized Yankee” by Patricia A. Kaufmann focuses on a cover mailed by Huggins while a prisoner in Rock Island, Illinois. Huggins surrendered himself and indicated he wished to change sides joining the Union army as a “Galvanized Yankee.” *LaPosta* 48 No. 4 (Fourth Quarter 2017).

RPOs/HPOs

In “Highway Post Offices: Two Tulsa HPOs, Part I” William Keller focuses on Tulsa, Oklahoma & Denison, Texas MPOS #230. Included in the article are trip schedules and cover showing cancels. *Trans. Post. Coll.* 68 No. 4 (June-August 2017).

Don Bowe’s “The Story of the Morris & Essex Railroad” looks at the history of that New Jersey railroad which was chartered in 1835. *NJPH* 45 No. 3 (August 2017).

World War II

Captain Lawrence B. Brennan, USN (Retired) in “New Jersey’s Many Contributions to the Decisive Naval Battles of Guadalcanal 11-15 November 1942” focuses on the contributions of Vice Admiral William F. Halsey, Jr. as well as the important part played by ships constructed in New Jersey that took part in those battles. *NJPH* 45 No. 3 (August 2017).

Captain Lawrence B. Brennan, USN (Retired) in “New Jersey’s Many Contributions to the Decisive Naval Battles of Guadalcanal 11-15 November 1942 Part 2” continues his research on the contributions of Vice Admiral William F. Halsey, Jr. as well as the important part played by ships constructed in New Jersey that took part in those battles. *NJPH* 45 No. 4 (November 2017).

Geographic Location

Florida

“Fort San Nicholas and the Town of St. Nicholas,” by Philip Eschbach investigates the early settlement that became Jacksonville. *Fla. Post. Hist. J.* 24 No. 3 (September 2017).

Deane R. Briggs discusses a cover in “‘Favorita’ or ‘Favoretta’? A Volusia (Flagler) County Ghost Town.” The cover has connections to Florida’s citrus industry. *Fla. Post. Hist. J.* 24 No. 3 (September 2017).

Georgia

Francis J. Crown, Jr. analyzes a Fort Gaines, Georgia cover in “Anatomy of a Fake Georgia Cover. *Ga. Post Roads* 25 No. 4 (Fall 2007).

Steve Swain looks at covers failed from and advertising post Civil War cotton expositions in his article, “A Postal History Curiosity of the 1895 Atlanta Exposition. *Ga. Post Roads* 25 No. 4 (Fall 2007).

Francis J. Crown, Jr. illustrates two Spanish American War patriotic covers in “Georgia on Covers.” *Ga. Post Roads* 25 No. 4 (Fall 2007).

“A Story of Three Civilian Flag of Truce Covers” by Galen Harrison describes three North to South flag-of-truce covers, one of which may have been franked with a Confederate stamp that was removed. *Ga. Post Roads* 26 No. 1 (Winter 2018).

A card marked “Postage Due 2 Cents” because it was an undeliverable notice is the subject of Francis J. Crown Jr.’s, “Notice of Undeliverable Publication from Atlanta.” *Ga. Post Roads* 26 No. 1 (Winter 2018).

Illinois

Ken Lawrence presents a cover from the Methodist Church's Crusade for Christ which serves as the first reported non-philatelic envelope the the 1944 17-cent Special Delivery stamp. Lawrence's article, "Finally, a 17-cent Special Delivery Stamp on an Entire Cover" discusses the scarcity of uses to pay for special delivery of non-first-class material with a weight up to two pounds. US Spec. 88 No. 10 (October 2017).

Louisiana

Doug Weisz's "New Orleans Philanthropist William Irby" focuses on an advertising cover to recount the history of William Irby, a chief executive with the American Tobacco Company. LaPosta 48 No. 4 (Fourth Quarter 2017).

Michigan

Cary E. Johnson in "Holoway, Mich. Postmaster Postmark" identifies a postmark not listed in Dave Ellis's Michigan County and Postmaster listing. Peninsular Phil. 59 No. 3 (Fall 2017).

New York

"Post Office of the Issue: Union Center" by David Williams provides a brief overview of the Union Center, New York Post Office including photographs at the turn of the century, a map showing the location of the office, and a listing of early postmasters. Excelsior! Jour. of the Emp. State Post. Hist. Soc. Whole No. 26 New Series (September 2017).

Bob Bramwell examines postmarking tools available to postal workers from the earliest days until 1950 in his article, "From Edison to 'Electric Charlie': The Schenectady Post Office Enters the Age of Industrialization." Excelsior! Jour. of the Emp. State Post. Hist. Soc. Whole No. 26 New Series (September 2017).

Larry Rausch in his article, "New York Wheel of Fortune Cancellations" provides background on this cancellation type, illustrates samples of covers serviced in New York, as well as provides a list of towns in the state using the Wheel of Fortune. Excelsior! Jour. of the Emp. State Post. Hist. Soc. Whole No. 26 New Series (September 2017).

"Promoting Schenectady" by Bob Bramwell looks at covers and postcards that carried messages that promoted the area. Excelsior! Jour. of the Emp. State Post. Hist. Soc. Whole No. 26 New Series (September 2017).

New Jersey

Robert G. Rose in "A Jersey Shore Mystery: The Beach House, Sea Girt, N.J. Cancel" looks at the carriage of mail from the Beach House hotel by the post office in Spring Lake, New Jersey and the mysterious Beach House, Sea Girt, N.J. cancel that is found on some mail posted by hotel guests. NJPH 45 No. 3 (August 2017).

Donald A. Chafetz continues his study of Morris County, New Jersey in "Mail Sent Abroad to and from Morris County, Part 5: Additional German Covers." NJPH 45 No. 3 (August 2017).

John A. Trotsky in "Peter D. Vroom, A New Jersey Man with Drive" provides biographical background on this important New Jersey correspondence. NJPH 45 No. 3 (August 2017).

Nineteenth century Democratic politics and its postal history is the subject of Andy Kupersmit's "A Cover & Letter from Henry C. Kelsey – Leader of the Kelsey Ring." NJPH 45 No. 4 (November 2017).

"Baseball and Bergen: One Cover, Two Stories" by Don Bowe uses postal history to uncover information about nineteenth century baseball played in New Jersey, with a focus on the Bergen club. NJPH 45 No. 4 (November 2017).

Larry Rausch provides background and a list of post offices which used "Wheel of Fortune" cancellations in his article, "New Jersey Wheel of Fortune Cancellation." NJPH 45 No. 4 (November 2017).

In his sixth installment, Donald A. Chafetz's "Mail Sent Abroad from Morris County, Part 6: Canada looks at mail sent from Morris County, New Jersey to various destinations in Canada. NJPH 45 No. 4 (November 2017).

North Carolina

Peter Martin traces the journey of a postcard mailed from Blowing Rock and delivered to Portland Oregon by way of Yellowstone Park in "A Rare Yellowstone Park Hotel Forwarding." LaPosta 48 No. 3 (Third Quarter 2017).

The Postal History of the Cherry Point Marine Corps Air Station" by Charles F. Hall, Jr. looks at that military installation and its relationship to the towns nearby. No. Caro. Post. Hist. 36 No. 4 (Fall 2017).

Tony L. Crumbley illustrates his article, "Piedmont Wagon Company – Hickory, North Carolina," with a late nineteenth century advertising cover showing a wagon produced by the firm. No. Caro. Post. Hist. 36 No. 4 (Fall 2017).

Oregon

"Swift & Company and the North Portland Post Office" by Charles A. Neyhart, Jr. recounts the postal history of the North Portland Post Office which served Swift & Company and its many employees. LaPosta 48 No. 4 (Fourth Quarter 2017).

Pennsylvania

"The Philadelphia American Machine D-3(2) Cancel" by Norman Shachat provides details on the discovery of 19th century D2(2) machine cancels from Philadelphia. Pa. Post. Hist. 45 No. 4 (November 2017).

William R. Schultz provides details on a late 19th century machine cancel used for approximately 25 months in his article, "West Chester Pennsylvania – The Barr-Fyke Machine Cancel." Pa. Post. Hist. 45 No. 4 (November 2017).

Tom Mazza covers Wyoming County and York County in the latest installment of the "2nd Update on Pennsylvania Manuscript Markings, Part XXIV." Pa. Post. Hist. 45 No. 4 (November 2017).

Texas

"Short-Paid Transatlantic Mail: A Look at UPU Penalty Rates" by Tom Koch looks at two short-paid covers from Texas to destinations in London and Switzerland. Texas Post. Hist. Soc. J. 42 No. 4 (November 2017).

Vermont

“Vermont Slogan Machine Cancel (Part 5) compiled by Glenn Estus notes recent Burlington, Vermont cancels. Vermont Phil. 62 No. 3 (August 2017).

Bill Lizotte presents the second installment of his article “Stampless Handstamped Covers (1792-1830)” focusing on covers from Fair Haven, Guilford Village, Irasburgh, Johnson, Middlebury, Montpelier and Rutland. Vermont Phil. 62 No. 3 (August 2017).

Bill Lizotte concludes his article, “Vermont Non-Standard Postmarks in Review.” Vermont Phil. 62 No. 3 (August 2017).

Wisconsin

Bill Robinson sorts out where Green Bay and Fort Howard mail was handled before the post offices were consolidated in 1895 in his article, “Was Mail Really Sent from Fort Howard?” Badger Post. Hist. 56 No. 1 (August 2016).

“Finding the Real McCoy” by Gene Setwyn looks at mail processing at Fort McCoy, distinguishing between the Official Mail Distribution Center and the Fort’s Contract Postal Unit. Badger Post. Hist. 56 No. 1 (August 2016).

A Wisconsin Territorial cover containing accurate and complicated delivery instructions is the subject of Bill Robinson’s, “Could an Indian Chief Describe the Route of an 1834 letter?” Badger Post. Hist. 56 No. 1 (August 2016).

Ken Grant’s “Money Order Business in Wisconsin” describes how that postal service operated and provides examples of forms used and mail sent using Money Order Business postal stationary and cancels. Badger Post. Hist. 56 No. 1 (August 2016).

“Wood County Post Office History Compiled by Frank Moertl, 1999 and Transcribed by Chris Barney, 2015” provides a list of post offices, name changes, closings, and post masters for Wood County, Wisconsin. Badger Post. Hist. 56 No. 2 (November 2016).

Bill Robinson writes about a post office that moved among three states without changing its location in “Gratiot’s Cove – In Michigan, Illinois, and Wisconsin.” Badger Post. Hist. 56 No. 2 (November 2016).

Journal Abbreviations

Ga. Post Roads = *Georgia Post Roads*, Douglas N. Clark, PO Box 427, Marstons Mills MA 02648.

Ia. Post. Hist. Soc. Bull. = *Iowa Postal History Society Bulletin*, PO Box 1375, Dubuque IA 52004.

Ill. Post. Hist. = *Illinois Postal Historian*, 951 Rose Court, Santa Clara CA 95051.

La Posta = *La Posta: A Journal of American Postal History*, PO Box 6074, Fredericksburg VA 22403.

N.C. Post. Hist. = *North Carolina Postal Historian*, PO Box 681447, Charlotte NC 28216.

NJPH = *NJPH The Journal of New Jersey Postal History Society*, 18 Balbrook Dr., Mendham NJ 07945.

Oh. Post. Hist. J. = *Ohio Postal History Journal*, 568 Illinois Ct., Westerville OH 43081.

Okla. Phil. = *The Oklahoma Philatelist*, 4005 Driftwood Circle, Yukon OK 73099.

Pa. Post. Hist. = *Pennsylvania Postal Historian*, 382 Tall Meadow Ln., Yardley PA 19067.

Peninsular Phil. = *The Peninsular Philatelist*, 244 Breckenridge West, Ferndale MI 48220.

Prexie Era = *The Prexie Era*, 7554 Brooklyn Av, NE, Seattle WA 98115-1302.

Tenn. Posts = *Tennessee Posts*, PO Box 871, Shelton WA 98594.
 Tex. Post. Hist. Soc. = *Texas Postal History Society Journal*, 1013 Springbrook Dr., DeSoto TX 75115.
 Trans. Post. Coll. = *Transit Postmark Collector*, Douglas N. Clark, PO Box 427, Marstons Mills MA 02648.
 US Spec. = *The United States Specialist*, 951 Rose Court, Santa Clara CA 95051.
 Vermont Phil. = *The Vermont Philatelist*, PO Box 451, Westport NY 12993-0147.

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Class of 2020	Terence Hines Gary Loew Michael Mead	Terencehines@aol.com garywloew@gmail.com michael.e.mead@verizon.net

Cover Illustration

Detail from a large post route map of the state of Tabasco in the Republic of Mexico, published by the Mexican Department of Posts and Telegraphs in 1934, one of a series that covered all states. Each map bore this chart of what the various post route lines meant. The portion of Tabasco illustrated was well served by national airlines converging on Villahermosa, but there were no railroads. A small route served by a runner (“a pie”) took a mountain route between Jalpa de Mendez and Nacajuca rather than the more direct horse route (“a caballo”) that joined Comalcalco and Villahermosa through Chichicapa, Cupilco, Agapa, Amatitlan, Jalpa de Mendez, Nacajuca, Taxco and Arroyo. Another such route on foot linked Teapa and Tacatalpa through La Trinidad, while another south-west from Teapa joined several small communities en route to Pichijalco, and one from Tacatalpa joined rural communities en route to Tapijulapa. Several maritime routes operated on the rivers of the state, the largest originating in Ceiba in the north. A stagecoach route linked Ceiba south to Comalcalco. Another stage route from Cardenas, which was served by air, went to Embarcadero which was served by a river route. Such a large wall map would have been invaluable for postmasters, and for the shipping schedules of businesses. Now these maps are a boon to postal historians.



Post Office Murals

Following up with the Post Office mural illustrated on the cover to our issue number 165 - the subject of the article judged to be the best of 2016 - we note that the Wolfsonian Museum in Miami Beach holds a great many original studies for such murals. The museum description for Figure 1 is: “Murals and other New Deal public art frequently paid respect to American Indians and their culture. These artworks, however, consistently portrayed them as part of the nation’s heritage, rather than addressing their complex experiences in contemporary American society. Edward Buk Ulreich’s fascination with Plains Indians may be seen in this preliminary sketch for a North Dakota Post Office mural. His respectful but sentimental attitude toward American Indians is captured by a quotation in the newspaper from New Rockford, the town where his Ural

was installed: “Because the wit man wished to justify their greed for the land, the Indian, unfairly, was often placed in an unfavorable light, and it has been my endeavor to portray them in the higher character in which I see them.”



Figure 1: Mural study, Regal Horseman of the Plains, 1939, Edward Buk Ulreich (American, b. Hungary, 1889-1966) Produced for the New Rockford, North Dakota Post Office competition, organized by Section of Fine Arts, Treasury Department, executed 1940, Gouache on wood. (The Wolfsonian-FIU, The Mitchell Wolfson, Jr. Collection)



Figure 2: Mural study, 1941-42, Lewis Rubenstein (American, 1908-2003) Produced for Riverton, New Jersey, Post Office, organized by Section of Fine Arts, Treasury Department, Crayon and graphite on paper.

Slavery was another sensitive topic approached by New Deal muralists with caution. The museum description for Figure 2 is: “Lewis Rubenstein won a commission to prepare a mural for the new post office in a small New Jersey town just as the United States was about to enter the Second World War. To honor the Quaker settlers of River-ton, Rubenstein proposed a mural that would portray John Woolman, an eighteenth-century Quaker resident of the area and one of America’s first abolitionists. Rubenstein’s study shows Woolman witnessing a slave auction, while in background soldiers wage the war that Woolman feared would be sparked by the institution of slavery. Rubenstein enlisted in the Army before getting the opportunity to paint the mural. In 1947, after the war had ended, the U.S. Public Buildings Administration asked him to proceed with the mural. But Rubenstein no longer believed that the subject was appropriate for, in his words, ‘a tiny suburban community,’ and he wrote to Washington that he preferred to paint a scene based on a design that he called ‘May Dance.’ When he got word that the government would not permit him to change subjects, the artist wrote back to terminate the contract.”

Economics, Geography and Postal History

Reviews by Terence Hines

Handbook of Worldwide Postal Reform, edited by Michael A. Crew, Paul R. Kleindorfer and James I. Campbell, Jr. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar, 2008, 459 pages, hardbound. ISBN: 978-1-84720-957-3, \$270.

Postal and Delivery Innovations in the Digital Economy, edited by Michael A. Crew and Timothy J. Brennan. Heidelberg: Springer, 2015, 336 pages, hardbound. ISBN: 978-3-319-12873-3, \$179.

Competition and Regulation in the Postal Delivery Sector, edited by Michael A. Crew and Paul R. Kleindorfer. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar, 2008, 399 pages, hardbound. ISBN: 978-1-84720-507-0, \$175.

The Geography of Movement. John C. Lowe and S. Moryadas. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1975, 333 pages, hardbound. ISBN: 0-395-18584-X. Out of print.

Serious postal history collecting, research and writing has always been informed by knowledge of the basics of the history of the postal system. Thus, academic historians, whether they know it or not, have contributed greatly to the field of postal history. The reverse, postal historians informing academic historians, has, until recently, not been so common. That situation began to change within the past decade. A prime example of the greater interaction between postal and academic historians is the Blount Postal History Symposia sponsored by the American Philatelic Society and the Smithsonian National Postal Museum.

Another academic field where the interaction between postal historians and academics has been minimal is economics. Some of the work that Tom Velk and I have been doing on the analyses of postmaster compensation and postal money order data has been presented regularly at the Blount Symposia and the annual meetings of the Canadian Economic Association, an organization that takes a pleasantly international perspective. Harris and DeBlois have presented their work at several business and economic history conferences worldwide. Those interested in postal history may think that the work of academic economists has little to offer in the way of insight into matters that would be informative about our collecting interests. While the overlap between academic history and postal history is greater than that between academic economic scholarship and the interests of postal historians, that overlap is not zero. There is, in fact, an area of basic economic research which has a direct bearing on postal history matters, especially the modern processes of postal reform and rate setting. In academic economics, this research is usually located in the sub-field of regulatory economics.

The relevance of economic scholarship for postal history is evidenced by the two books under review here. Like most of the books in this field, they are quite expensive, although copies can sometimes be obtained for much less than list price on Amazon or Ebay. Crew, Kleindorfer and Campbell, the editors of "Handbook of Worldwide Postal Reform," state that postal reform "may be considered part of a broader movement worldwide, which included privatization of network industries" and that "the increasing need to integrate postal operations with other means of communications and increasing the need to come to grips with electronic substitution and technology changes have pushed the postal sector inexorably in the direction of commercialization and markets"(p. 2). The book examines "aspects of postal reform including the origins of the postal monopoly and universal postal service and the relationship between the monopoly (or the reserved area) and the legal obligation to maintain universal service (the universal service obligation or USO)" (p. 3). While this title was published almost ten years ago, its contents are highly representative of the type of work being done by economists dealing with postal matters.

The book is divided into three sections: "Economic Analysis of Reform"; "Transformation and Innovation" and "Regional and Country Studies". The papers in all three sections are quite technical and use considerable mathematical modeling. Of greatest interest to the readers of this journal will be James I. Campbell Jr.'s "A brief history of the United States postal monopoly law." The other 24 papers address the causes and effects of economic changes such as privatization of postal functions and increased competition from non-governmental firms. The book is an excellent example of the economic analysis of postal operations.

"Postal and Delivery Innovation in the Digital Economy" is one volume in the series "Topics in Regulatory Economics and Policy" published by Springer Publishing based in Germany. At present, there are 53 volumes in the series, 15 of which deal with postal matters. There are 25 papers in this volume. The focus here is on topics somewhat more directly related to mail and package delivery than those in the Crew, Klein-

dorfer and Campbell volume. Representative papers are “Spam or Ham? Assessing the Value of Direct Mail,” “E-commerce and the Return of Unwanted Goods: A Case for Cooperation Among Providers of Postal and Non-postal Parcel Services” and “Informational Privacy and Registered Certified Mail: What do the People Want?”

“Competition and Regulation in the Postal and Delivery Sector” is an excellent example of the diversity of approaches taken by economists who study postal matters. While many of the 24 chapters cover traditional economic issues regarding competition and regulation, several branch out and discuss more esoteric issues. Cremer et al. (Chapter 2) analyze the “Social costs and benefits of the universal service obligation in the postal market”. This is the requirement that postal services deliver mail to all addresses at the same price, regardless of the costs involved in servicing remote locations. In chapter 3, “The distribution of post offices in Italy and the United States,” Cohen et al. find that “Both Italy and the United States have a disproportionate percentage of their post offices located in rural areas” (p. 44), a distribution that is “non-economic” meaning that the costs of maintain it outweigh the benefits obtained.

Anson et al. invoke the name of the inventor of the postage stamp in chapter 20 titled “Waiting for ‘Rowland Hill’ – elements of reform of postal services in Sub-Saharan Africa”. They report that only a small percentage of addressees in this region receive mail service and that this is through expensive post office boxes. As a result, “Large mailers such as utilities companies (sic) are unsatisfied with the services offered by the actual designated postal operators, and tend to organize their own delivery networks” (p. 306). They recommend that nations in the area establish free delivery services similar to those advocated by Hill.

It is unlikely that the papers in these volumes will be of immediate interest to postal historians. However, it is useful to be aware of the sophisticated economic analyses being used by postal decision makers that will affect postal history in the 21st century.

Another academic field that can and has helpfully informed the study of postal history is geography. One might even consider some aspects of postal history as a sub-field of geography; specifically, our field’s interest in the establishment and change over time of postal routes and activity. Even a book published as long ago as Lowe and Moryadas’s volume contains much that is relevant to the study of postal history. These authors cover “Nodes and Routes” (Chapter 4), “Transportation Networks” (Chapter 5) and other concepts central to the understanding of the development of the system of postal routes in any geographic area.

Unfortunately, some geographers remain apparently ignorant of the importance of postal route data as a source of historical geographic information. For example, Schulten’s otherwise excellent “*Mapping the Nation. History and Cartography in Nineteenth-Century America*” (University of Chicago Press, 2012) makes no mention whatsoever of the numerous highly detailed official postal route maps of the 19th century. Ignoring these, and Burr’s famous early 19th century maps showing postal routes, canals and roads, is a significant weakness of this book.

As the discussion above shows, there can be significant cross-fertilization between traditional academic fields of history, economics and geography. That cross fertilization is underway in history as shown by the success of the Blount Postal History Symposia that have brought together academics and collectors. In economics and geography, that cross fertilization is just beginning.

Early American Letter Writers

A review by Tim O'Connor

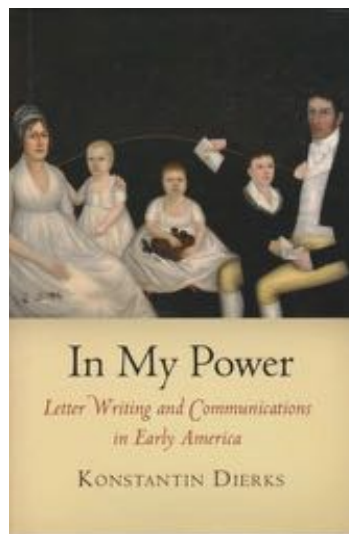
In My Power, Letter Writing and Communications in Early America by Konstantin Dierks, 2009, 356 pages.

Konstantin Dierks sets out to demonstrate the crucial role of letter writing in the evolution of America, American thought and our Society as we know it today. He buttresses his claims by noting that he has read letters from more than 300 archived from family collections. Each of his chapters contains examples and quotes from historical material.

In the American colonies, with the arrival of nobles and Crown appointed ministers, we learn from Dierks that the ability to read and write was a measure of class distinction, often used to perpetuate those economic and racial divides. This was recognized by our earliest colonists, eager to be free of Royal and pre-existing strictures. A chapter is devoted to self-help pamphlets, as well as other teaching aides and schools which aided the rise of a middle class, merchants, tradesmen and businessmen by teaching them to read and write. The role of paper making and ink production is interesting.

Throughout the book Dierks explores the role of a Post Office. He does not get involved in the mechanics of the Post (routes, regulations and schedules) but chooses, correctly, to focus on the motives for having a Post Office and the political uses of and consequences of a functioning Post. I counted more than 125 citations in the index involving the word "post"! In his chapter on Revolution and War, he notes the central roles of William Goddard and Benjamin Franklin. He gets closer to actual postal history than he realizes when he discusses letter writing in the Shoemaker family of Philadelphia and New York. Samuel Shoemaker's fingerprints are all over a number of auction lots from the Siegel sale of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania in 2007.

All in all, the text is worthy, with abundant footnotes, providing a different avenue into understanding what letters and a post are all about. The book should interest historians of all stripes, not just colonial enthusiasts for whom it should be required reading.



Foreign Postal History in Other Journals

by Daniel Piazza

Reviews will continue in the June issue. Copies of journals for review should be sent to the Associate Editor, Daniel Piazza, National Postal Museum, P.O. Box 37012 MRC 570, Washington DC 20013-7012.

Journal Abbreviations

The American Stamp Dealer & Collector, ASDA, P.O. Box 692, Leesport PA 19533.

BNA Topics. Journal of the British North America Philatelic Society. Andy Ellwood, Secretary. 10 Doris Ave., Gloucester, Ontario K1T 3W8, Canada.

British Caribbean Philatelic Journal. Eric Todd, Secretary. 623 Ashley St, Foxboro, Ontario K0K 2B0, Canada.

China Clipper. Journal of the China Stamp Society. Tracy L. Shew, Secretary. 16836 122nd Ave SE, Renton WA 98058-6055.

The Chronicle of the U.S. Classic Postal Issues, Sec. Dwayne Littauer, P.O. Box 750368, New Orleans LA 70175.

The Collectors Club Philatelist, 22 East 35th St., New York NY 10016-3806.

The Congress Book, Sec/Treas. Chuck Wooster, 3991 Gulf Shore Blvd., N., Apt. 301, Naples FL 34103.

Cuban Philatelist. Journal of the Cuban Philatelic Society of America. Juan Farah, Secretary. PO Box 141656, Coral Gables, FL 33114-1656.

France and Colonies Philatelist. Journal of the France and Colonies Philatelic Society. Joel L. Bromberg, Corresponding Secretary. PO Box 17, Narrowsburg NY 12764-0017.

Gibbons Stamp Monthly. Stanley Gibbons Ltd., 7 Parkside, Christchurch Rd, Ringwood, Hampshire BH24 3SH, United Kingdom.

Japanese Philately. Journal of the International Society for Japanese Philately. William Eisenhauer, Secretary. PO Box 230462, Tigard OR 97281.

Journal of the Malta Philatelic Society. John A. Cardona, Secretary-Treasurer. 56 Triq Santa Marija, Tarxien, TXN 1703, Malta.

PHSC Journal. Journal of the Postal History Society of Canada. Secretary-Treasurer, 10 Summerhill Ave, Toronto, Ontario M4T 1A8, Canada.

Post Horn. Journal of the Scandinavia Collectors Club. Alan Warren, Secretary. PO Box 39, Exton PA 19341-0039.

Postal History, The Journal of the Postal History Society [UK] 22 Burton Crescent, Stoke-on-Trent, ST1 6BT UK.

Rossica. Journal of the Rossica Society of Russian Philately. Steve Volis, Treasurer. 9 Hickory Ct, Manalapan NJ 07726.



Editor Diane DeBlois with the major distraction in the life of Associate Editor Dan Piazza - at APS Stampshow in Richmond, August 2017.

Postal History Medal

Given at the judges' discretion.
Report by awards chair, **Douglas N. Clark**

St. Louis Expo (March 31-April 2, 2017, St. Louis MO): Jean Winkler, "Switzerland registered mail, 1785-1863."

Garfield-Perry March Party (March 23-25, 2017, Cleveland OH): Jerry Miller, "The evolution of the post offices in German New Guinea, 1888-1914."

ORAPEX (May 12-14, 2017, Ottawa Canada): Sam Chiu, "Wei Hai Wei China, 1896-1949."

PIPEX (May 12-14, 2017, Portland OR): Roger Heath, "Swiss flexible-head razor cancellers."

NAPEX (June 9-11, 2017, McLean VA): Jeffrey Bohn, "Accountancy Markings associated with the 1857 France-British postal convention."

Minnesota Stamp Expo (July 21-23, 2017, Minneapolis MN) Rob Faux, "Postal History featuring the 1861 United States 24-cent adhesive."

APS STAMPSHOW (August 3-6, 2017, Richmond VA): Ronald E. Majors, "Canadian postal history: a rate study using decimal franked and stampless covers."
LITERATURE Terence Hines, "A history of postal service in Hanover, New Hampshire since 1761."

BALPEX (September 1-3, 2017, Hunt Valley MD): Alfredo Frohlich, "The evolution of postal systems in Panama, 1777-1878."

SEAPEX (September 9-10, 2017, Tukwila WA): Anthony F. Dewey, "A postal history of Hartford Connecticut as US post office: 1792-1897."

NOJEX September 8-10, 2017, Secaucus NJ): Clifford J. Alexander, "Alternative ways letters were carried by private individuals and companies."

INDYPEX (October 5-7, 2017, Noblesville IN): Jerry Miller, "From duplex to technical: the evolution of experimental and early machine postmarks worldwide, 1857-1920s."

Filatelie Fiesta (November 10-12, 2017, San José CA): Kathryn Johnson, "19th century overseas mail to and from Scotland."

CHICAGOPEX (November 17-19, 2017, Itasca IL): Jerry H. Miller, "From Hill to Bickerdike" The Victorian-era experimental machine postmarks of England, 1857-1901. **LITERATURE** Julian Auleytnner, "Postal communications in Haller's Blue Army, 1917-1920."



President's Message by Yamil Kouri

This year's annual Spellman Museum Postal History Symposium will be held on Thursday, May 3, a day before the start of the WSP Philatelic Show in nearby Boxboro. The theme of the symposium is "A Century of U.S. Air Mail." The distinguished group of speakers includes Scott Trepel, Murray Abramson, David Crotty, and Santiago Cruz. A copy of the famous Inverted Jenny will be on display at the museum, courtesy of the APS. For more information visit <https://www.spellmanmuseum.org/>.



The speaker line-up from the Spellman Symposium 2017 on the philately and postal history of South Africa. From left: Johan Joubert, organizer Yamil Kouri, Peter Thy, Ken Lawrence, Colin Fraser, Guy Dillaway, Tim Bartshe.

Spotting modern postal history:

a functioning Cutler Mail Chute at 100 State Street in Albany, New York. Manufactured in Rochester, New York and first installed in the Elwood Building there in 1884, the Cutler chutes were originally limited to railroad stations and public buildings but in 1905 the USPOD allowed them in hotels taller than five stories and in apartment houses with more than 50 units. James G. Cutler received patent #284,951 for this design, which stated that the box must be of metal with a door open on hinges on one side. If a receiving box was to be placed in a building that was more than two stories high, the bottom of the box was required to be outfitted with an elastic fusion to "prevent injury to the mail." [Information from the National Postal Museum.]

